CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH ON LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PEER-REVIEWED SOCIAL WORK JOURNALS

by

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ABSTRACT

In the mid-1990s, following years of dramatic growth in many ethnic minority populations in the United States—particularly in the Latino population—many helping professions were compelled to develop and implement culturally competent policies, practices, and standards to better meet the unique needs of the increasingly diverse population. Cultural competency standards and guidelines became an integral part of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics* and a key component in the accreditation standards required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Social work literature is replete with demands for direct practice social workers who are working with Latino individuals, families and communities to increase their level of cultural competency, yet the literature calling for social work researchers and scholars working with Latinos to account for and demonstrate cultural competency during scholarly inquiry is limited and relatively unexplored. This study used a content analysis approach to evaluate social work journal articles published from 1990 through 2012 that examine Latino populations. A content analysis approach was used to determine whether and to what degree social work researchers and scholars were applying culturally competent research practices in their work with Latino populations in the United States. The content analysis used an analytical framework based on Meleis's eight criteria for culturally competent scholarship as well as additional cultural competency measures developed for this study. This study advanced the knowledge base of cultural competency

in social work research and scholarship on Latino populations in the United States and provided an assessment framework to examine the cultural competency of future social work research practices and scholarly efforts on Latinos.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This exploratory descriptive study examined the application of cultural competency standards and principles by social work researchers in peer-reviewed social work journals addressing the Latino population in the United States. The first chapter is organized into several sections covering the following topics: (a) Latino population in the United States, (b) recent social work practice among Latino populations in the United States, (c) ethics and social work research regarding Latinos, (d) statement of the problem, (e) purpose of the study, and (f) the significance for social work. The chapter concludes with an overview of the study.

In the United States, the Latino population has become the largest ethnic and racial minority group in the nation (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). According to Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, and Albert (2011), Latinos constitute 16.7% of the total U.S. population, and they continue to be among the fastest growing populations in the nation. Estimates show that by 2050 they will compose upwards of 30% of the nation's population (Ennis et al., 2011).

As a racial and ethnic minority population, Latinos living within the United States face distinct macro-, mezzo-, and microlevel challenges and barriers (Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez, Yeakley, & Ortega, 2000; Organista, 2009). Economic, political, and social barriers in the areas of education, employment, health care, housing, and immigration all

negatively affect the overall health and well-being of Latino individuals, families, and communities (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). Given the numerous challenges facing the Latino population in the United States, the social work profession has increasingly sought to enhance social work practice to meet the Latino population's unique cultural needs, and it must continue to do so as this population continues to expand (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Organista, 2009). The values and ethics of the social work profession emphasize the need for direct-practice social workers, such as caseworkers and clinicians, as well as indirect social workers, such as educators, administrators, and researchers, to each practice in their respective areas in a competent manner, particularly when working with individuals, families, and communities of differing cultures. Terms such as *cultural sensitivity, cultural responsiveness, cultural proficiency,* and *cultural competency* frequently appear throughout the literature to describe an individual's or system's need to practice in a manner that respects and values individuals, families, and communities from all culture groups (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Logan, 2012; Lu, Lum, & Chen, 2001).

The term *cultural competency* differs from similar terms in that it not only emphasizes the need for sensitivity and respect toward cultural groups but also refers to the need for individuals and systems to demonstrate congruence in their attitudes, behaviors, and practices that allows for effective cross-cultural work (Cross et al., 1989; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Other prominent scholars have described cultural competency as a multidimensional concept involving the continuous acquisition and

integration of cultural awareness, knowledge, and practice skills (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009; Cross et al., 1989; Green, 1999; Kelly, 2008; Kwong, 2009; Lee, 2010; Lu et al., 2008; Lum, 2004, 2005; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005; D. Sue, 2006). Additionally, cultural competency can refer to developing and maintaining a multicultural perspective about a culturally diverse group's particular experiences and perceptions (Walker & Stanton, 2000). The term cultural competency is used throughout this document to refer to the ability of social workers to demonstrate attitudes, behaviors, and skills that allow for effective cross-cultural work. Walker and Stanton (2000) argue that cultural competency is a matter of ethical responsibility when working with culturally diverse groups.

Social work practitioners are expected to adhere to the professional values and ethics within their respective areas of practice, whether as direct practitioners or as indirect practitioners such as social work researchers (Reamer, 1999). Social work researchers have an ethical responsibility to ensure that research examining culturally diverse populations follows cultural competency standards and guidelines (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Marsh, Cha, & Kuo, 2004; Mokuau, Garlock-Tuiali'i, & Lee, 2008; D. Sue, 2006). Performing culturally competent research is critical to the social work profession, because research forms the basis for academic instruction, practice recommendations, theory development, and future research endeavors. Using a content analysis of peer-reviewed social work journal articles from the years 1990 to 2012, this dissertation examines the cultural competency of social work research and scholarship about Latino populations living in the United States. Due to the unique cultural, social, economic, and political barriers faced by Latinos living within the United States, the scope of the current

study was limited to examining research and scholarship on Latino populations in the United States. The findings of this study serve to enhance culturally competent social work research with Latino populations and to broaden the knowledge base of culturally competent research practice within the social work discipline.

Latino Populations in the United States

An integral component of culturally competent social work research is gaining an increased understanding of a particular cultural group. As a basis for culturally competent social work practice with Latinos, social workers must have an increased awareness of the ethnic terms used in the media, academic literature, and government documents as well as among the members of the population (Balgopal, 2000; Delgado, 2007). The terms Hispanic and Latino often appear interchangeably throughout literature and among the media to describe individuals who identify with, are descendants of, or whose country of origin is among the Spanish-speaking nations that comprise Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Spain (Balgopal, 2000; Castex, 1994; Delgado, 2007). Individuals predominantly prefer to identify themselves using their country of origin rather than the inclusive terms of Hispanic or Latino (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). The term Hispanic was derived from a recognition of the common influence of Spanish culture and language upon the countries and territories of the Caribbean as well as Central and South America, and yet the term is often a direct reminder of colonization and European influence upon the indigenous peoples of the Americas (McGoldrick et al., 2005). The use of the term Latino can include “new immigrants, descendants of some of the original inhabitants of this continent, American citizens, English and Spanish speakers, people with different national origins, those who identify closely with their ethnic heritage, and

those who do not" (Gutiérrez et al., 2000, p. 542). The term Latino is commonly used to acknowledge the indigenous peoples, lands, and cultures that existed prior to the influence of the Spanish colonizers, and is a sociopolitical term under which these multiple nationalities can unite in their struggle for political influence and social justice (McGoldrick et al., 2005). The term Latino will be used throughout this document as a means of describing the Latino population generally, although there is a genuine recognition on the part of this author similar to that of Gutiérrez, Yeakley, and Ortega (2000); Castex (1994); and many other scholars that the terms Latino and Hispanic represent a vast diversity of nationalities, ancestries, and cultures. The further diversification of the Latino population has continued to occur as the population has grown and expanded over the past several decades.

The Latino population experienced significant growth in the United States from 1990 to 2010. The Latino population in 1990 was 22.4 million, or 9% of the total U.S. population; by 2010, the number had risen to 50.5 million, or 16% of the U.S. population (Ennis et al., 2011). Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population growth rate was 43%, which was four times the total U.S. population growth rate during the same period (Ennis et al., 2011). U.S. census data show there were 52.9 million Latinos in the United States in 2012; approximately 76% were citizens. Of those citizens, 65% were native born and 35% were foreign born, meaning they were not U.S. citizens at birth (Brown & Patten, 2014). Latinos of Mexican origin comprise more than 63% of the total Latino population in the United States and account for 75% of the overall increase in the Latino population over the past decade (Ennis et al., 2011). The Puerto Rican and Cuban populations are the second and third largest Latino groups in the United States and represent approximately

9% and 4% of the Latino population, respectively (Ennis et al., 2011). The most recent census projections indicate that Latinos will make up approximately 29% of the population by 2060 (Stepler & Brown, 2015). Although the Latino population has experienced growth across the entire United States, three-quarters of Latinos reside in the West or South, with over half of the population living in just three states: California, Texas, and Florida (Ennis et al., 2011). The growth and expansion of the Latino population directly affect the social work profession due to the increased need for social workers to help Latino individuals, families, and communities with confronting and addressing many socioeconomic and political challenges (Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

Effective culturally competent practice involves understanding the numerous institutional and systemic barriers that face Latino populations living in the United States. The most prevalent barriers include poverty, educational attainment, access to health care, and immigration status, with many of these barriers being interrelated (Balgopal, 2000; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). As social work professionals in both direct and indirect practice reach a better understanding of the impact of institutional barriers facing many Latinos, they are then more equipped to meet the needs of the Latino population and to advocate for systemic changes (Balgopal, 2000; Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

Many Latino individuals, families and communities face numerous challenges pertaining to socioeconomic factors. These factors include low household income rates, high levels of poverty, and low educational attainment. For example, the median household income for native-born Latinos is $43,400; for foreign-born Latinos, the household income drops to $37,000, with both of these segments of the population having a poverty rate of approximately 25% (Brown & Patten, 2014). The economic

disparity is significant when compared to Whites, who have a median income of $56,000 and a poverty rate of approximately 11% (Brown & Patten, 2014). Cervantes, Mejia, and Mena (2010) posit that "it is not uncommon for them [Latinos] to be overwhelmed by the challenges and levels of impairment that can be present as a consequence of having low-income status and poverty" (p. 284). Traditional policy and systemic interventions designed to address the needs of Latinos living in poverty are particularly challenging for those who do not have permanent legal status (Enchautegui, 1995). Frequently, unauthorized immigrants are unable to access formal government support systems to address their impoverished conditions (Enchautegui, 1995). In addition to the challenges created by governmental systems, the business sector also affects the economic welfare of many Latinos. Corporations and small businesses frequently employ unauthorized immigrants in such a manner that maintains their employment status outside the purview of government oversight and regulation, which makes policy and systemic intervention extremely difficult with regard to discrimination, working conditions, safety issues, and advocating for fair wages (Enchautegui, 1995).

For foreign-born Latinos and their families, economic difficulties are often due to multiple factors that include limited employment opportunities, unskilled labor environments, and language barriers. Latino immigrants frequently face the reality that achieving a basic standard of living in the United States involves physically demanding labor, difficult work schedules and long hours, multiple household earners, and decreased family time (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Additionally, the increased cost of living in the United States often necessitates that the majority of time and wages be spent meeting the family's basic needs (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Those economic challenges and

barriers make it difficult to access many basic and essential resources such as adequate housing, educational materials, and health care. Operating within such impoverished conditions significantly affects the overall well-being and stability of Latino individuals and families (Cervantes, Mejia, & Mena, 2010).

In addition to poverty and economic barriers, education has remained a significant issue for Latinos (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). Over the past decade, Latino children have become the fastest growing populace of students in both elementary and secondary schools (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waak, 2009; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). During the 1990s, Ceballo (2004) and Martinez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2004) stated that achievement gaps and educational deficits—including high dropout rates and underachievement—were significant issues among the Latino population. Since the 1990s, the educational system has continued to face significant challenges adapting to the changing demographic among its student body in such areas as addressing language barriers and cultural differences while also experiencing a shortage of bilingual educators and providing insufficient cross-cultural training for teachers and staff (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waak, 2009; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Addressing these systemic barriers and challenges has been fraught with much controversy and debate throughout the nation over the past two decades. Latinos have also faced barriers brought on by bilingual education policies as well as challenges to affirmative action policies for college admissions (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). Regarding bilingual programs, educational systems throughout the country have generally responded to language barrier issues by instituting bilingual education programs, offering ESL courses, hiring additional bilingual and bicultural teachers, and providing training on cross-cultural education (Cavazos-Rehg

& DeLucia-Waak, 2009; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Recent statistics reveal that the continued failure of educational systems to support diverse communities remains an issue for the Latino population. Brown and Patten (2014) found that 49% of foreign-born and 19% of native-born Latinos have not graduated high school, and the Latino population has an average high school dropout rate of 6.7%—the highest among all the racial groups in the United States. In comparison, only 9% of Whites have not graduated high school, and the White population has an average high school dropout rate of 3.4% (Brown & Patten, 2014). Given the sheer size of the Latino population and the increased number of Latino school-age children, it is imperative that educational barriers and deficits be addressed in order to avoid socioeconomic outcomes such as substance use, delinquency, lower income, and high unemployment rates (Martinez et al., 2004). Among Latinos, "family income, parents' involvement in their children's education, and parents' own educational backgrounds positively related to postsecondary academic achievement and aspirations of Hispanic adolescents" (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007, p. 182). In order to address these educational barriers effectively, social workers must become familiar with the educational system and the policies that negatively affect Latino students (Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

In addition to educational challenges, limited access to health care ranks among the greatest concerns among government entities and Latino communities (Brown & Patten, 2014; Documét & Sharma, 2004; Greenwald, O'Keefe, & DiCamillo, 2005; Katz, Ang, & Suro, 2012; Office of Minority Health, n.d.). In 2012, the Latino population had the highest uninsured rates (29%) of any racial or ethnic population in the country (Office of Minority Health, n.d.). Among foreign-born Latinos, there is an even greater disparity,

with an uninsured rate of 49%. Impoverished conditions, low wages, immigration status, and a shortage of employers that provide health insurance benefits commonly leave Latino individuals and families without health insurance and limited access to health care services (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Greenwald et al., 2005; Katz et al., 2012; Padilla, Radev, Hummer, & Eujeong, 2006). Receiving adequate health care is another challenge faced by many Latinos due to deficits within the health care industry (Bender, Clawson, Harlan, & Lopez, 2004; Delgado, 2007; Documét & Sharma, 2004). One such deficit is the limited understanding of Latino cultural beliefs and practices among many health care providers, administrators, and policymakers (Bender, Clawson, Harlan, & Lopez, 2004; Delgado, 2007; Documét & Sharma, 2004). A limited understanding of Latino cultural beliefs and practices has led to errors in the assessment and diagnosis of medical concerns (Bender et al., 2004; Delgado, 2007). Adequate communication between patients and health care providers is another challenge facing many Latinos within the health care system. Due to a limited number of bilingual physicians, nurses, medical staff, and qualified interpreters, communication with Latino patients and families is often poor (Bender et al., 2004; Delgado, 2007; Documét & Sharma, 2004). Poor communication between patients and health care providers can lead to a lack of compliance with medical treatment protocols on the part of patients (Bender et al., 2004). Other systemic barriers that limit access to adequate health care have included increasingly complicated managed health care systems, rising costs, and health care coverage restrictions (Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

Health care barriers such as those mentioned have continued to be an issue over the past several decades. During the early 1980s, the importance of providing culturally

appropriate health care services garnered enough attention that the federal government created the Office of Minority Health within the Department of Health and Human Services (Office of Minority Health, 2001). The Office of Minority Health was designed to help improve and ensure that culturally diverse populations had access to health care and to increase culturally sensitive medical practices (Office of Minority Health, 2001). In 2000, an executive order was issued addressing the need for improved access to services for Limited English Proficiency patients. According to this order, agencies that were recipients of federal funding were required to institute programmatic changes to meet the needs of Limited English Proficiency patients/clients, particularly to address the growing Spanish-speaking population (Office of Management and Budget, 2001). An attempt to further improve the provision of health care services to culturally diverse populations occurred in 2001, when the Office of Minority Health developed the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards initiative, which all federally funded agencies were required to integrate into their services (Office of Minority Health, 2001).

To address the multiple health care challenges facing Latinos, the health care industry has attempted numerous approaches, such as increasing the number of prevention outreach programs in Latino communities, employing additional bilingual medical providers and staff, as well as training medical providers on culturally appropriate treatment practices (Delgado, 2007; National Alliance for Hispanic Health, 2001; Thom & Tirado, 2006). Yet despite all of those efforts, health care disparities continue to be a significant barrier facing the Latino population (Brown & Patten, 2014; Documét & Sharma, 2004; Greenwald et al., 2005; Katz et al., 2012; Office of Minority Health, n.d.). As access to health care continues to be a critical need among the Latino

population, social workers should advocate for systemic changes in health care policy that would improve access to health care services.

Lastly, the issue of immigration status remains a constant challenge facing many within the Latino population. A significant subset of the Latino population living in the United States does not have the required U.S. immigration documentation to reside in the country as permanent residents or citizens. Individuals without the necessary immigration documents are often deemed unauthorized immigrants. The most recent estimates indicate that there are approximately 12.7 million unauthorized Latino immigrants living in the United States (Brown & Patten, 2014). Mexicans compose the largest group among the unauthorized immigrant population, totaling 58% (Taylor, Lopez, Passel, & Motel, 2011). Approximately 49% of all adult unauthorized immigrants have minor children, and at least 9 million people live in what is termed a mixed-status family, in which at least one parent is an unauthorized immigrant and at least one of the children is a U.S. citizen (Taylor et al., 2011). Unauthorized immigrants and their families frequently experience high levels of stress due to the legal vulnerability of the unauthorized individual to being discovered, detained, or deported from the country (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). In the instance that a parent is deported, there are significant psychological consequences on the family and children who remain in the United States, which include feelings of anxiety and abandonment, symptoms of trauma, changes in eating and sleeping, isolation, depression, academic problems, and family conflict (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Casas & Cabrera, 2011).

The attempt to address immigration through stricter immigration policies, limited access to government services, and increased law enforcement efforts promotes a

powerful sentiment that has "contributed to the creation and maintenance, especially through the media, of negative and harmful stereotypes, beliefs, and profiles of the immigrant as contributing to social problems" (Casas & Cabrera, 2011, p. 293). In June 2012, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a significant immigration policy change. The new policy, entitled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, allows immigrants under 30 years old who arrived in the United States prior to age 16 to apply for temporary work permits and, if they qualify, shields them from deportation (Passel & Lopez, 2012). It is estimated that this program would provide relief to at least 1.7 million of the 4.4 million undocumented immigrants under the age of 30 (Passel & Lopez, 2012). Although not without its own controversy, this immigration policy may have laid the groundwork for future immigration reform. It appears to be a reasonable attempt to consider the welfare of immigrants and immigrant families—in this case, children whose parents brought them to the United States. The legal vulnerability of many Latino immigrants and the psychosocial impact of this vulnerability upon Latino families should be among the primary considerations of both direct and indirect social work practitioners as well as of the systems that serve this population. Keeping these considerations in mind will mean that these practitioners and systems will avoid practices that may put immigrant individuals, families, and communities at risk or that reinforce cultural stereotypes.

As the Latino population continues to grow and expand, it is imperative that the social work profession seek to understand and account for the systemic barriers that create multiple challenges for this population. The social work profession must also ensure that direct and indirect practitioners receive accurate information and education

about the skills that are required for effective cross-cultural work with Latino populations (Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009).

Social Work with Latino Populations in the United States

The diversity and social dynamics of Latino populations living in the United States require that social workers be aware of the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts that have impacted Latino citizens and noncitizens and that continue to influence Latino individuals, families, and communities (Balgopal, 2000; Delgado, 2007; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). In order to meet the numerous challenges facing this expanding population, the social work profession must look to increase the number of professionals who are able to work effectively with the Latino population (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). A portion of this preparation should take place in the academic setting, with professors incorporating content and curricula specifically focused on the Latino population; yet many social work programs do not include content on social work with Latinos into their curricula (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). According to Furman et al. (2009), at least 90% of graduate social work faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to prepare students for culturally competent practice with the Latino population, yet only 40% of the same faculty felt students were prepared to work among this particular minority group. Preparing to assist the Latino population must also include systemic changes within social work education, such as recruiting increased numbers of bilingual and bicultural social work faculty and practitioners who have experience with the diversity of Latino culture as well as the many systemic barriers this culture faces (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). The social work profession must also make a concerted effort to educate and train

current practitioners and faculty on culturally competent best practices in order to work more effectively with Latino individuals, families, and communities (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). Much of what is considered best practice for social workers who serve Latino populations has been generated by research studies outside the field of social work (Gelman, 2004; Malgady & Zayas, 2001; Organista, 2009). More commonly, practice recommendations that social workers generate are based on the practical wisdom and experiential learning of those who work directly with the Latino population (Delgado, 2007; Gelman, 2004; Organista, 2009). In fact, many social workers prefer to receive information and training through case staffing with colleagues and attending trainings or workshops (Marsh et al., 2004), yet many human service organizations and educators expect social workers to apply best practice models and techniques that are based on research literature (Aisenberg, 2008; McBeath, Briggs, & Aisenberg, 2010; Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, 2010).

While social work is among the many helping professions that seek to educate and train its practitioners on evidence-based practice models, the search for literature on culturally sensitive best practices for working with Latinos is significantly lacking (Delgado, 2007). The existing literature suggests that best practice social work interventions with Latinos are not only limited in number but also that the recommendations frequently lack scholarly research and empirical evidence regarding specific practice approaches (Delgado, 2007; Gelman, 2004; Malgady & Zayas, 2001; Organista, 2009). Social work professionals in both direct and indirect practice are frequently met with multiple challenges in their attempts to find social work research literature related to Latino populations living in the United States (Casado, Negi, &

Hong, 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Jackson & Samuels, 2011). One challenge facing many social work direct practitioners is a matter of acquiring access to professional journals once university studies are complete. While numerous social work journals exist, social work practitioners meet with financial or logistical barriers in procuring access to articles found in these professional social work journals (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). This challenge results in a general lack of awareness and understanding about the knowledge that is being published and distributed regarding social work research and culturally competent practice occurring among Latino populations (Casado et al., 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

Social work professionals—particularly social work researchers and scholars—who do have frequent access to journals or are able to gain access to professional journals, are met with a scarcity of journal articles pertaining to Latino populations (Casado et al., 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Lum, 2004). The number of journal articles related to Latinos is not only limited in general among human service–oriented professions but is limited particularly from a social work perspective (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Queralt, 1984). A review of the available social work literature on the topics of direct and indirect practice with Latino populations is critical, because it helps identify best practice approaches, detects gaps in available knowledge, and provides direction for future research efforts (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). In an extensive literature search on the topic of social work with Latinos, Gutiérrez et al. (2000) reviewed 37 peer-reviewed social work journals published over a 25-year period. They found that only 181 articles focused specifically on Latino populations, with the majority of those articles (58) relating to the Mexican population and 50 others focusing

on the Puerto Rican population. Along with the limited number of social work articles on the topic of Latinos, the authors also found that the use of the terms of "Latino" or "Hispanic" in the title and content of the articles was problematic and potentially misleading; many of the articles referenced only one particular nationality, thereby failing to recognize the diversity among the Latino population and increasing the likelihood that the information was being generalized to the broader Latino population.

The literature search performed by Gutiérrez et al. (2000) also revealed significant gaps in the literature regarding the topics related to the Latino population. For example, the topics most frequently addressed over the 25-year period focused on the Latino elderly and child welfare, followed by subjects such as cultural competency, health-related issues, mental health therapy, and community work (Gutiérrez et al., 2000). The authors identified numerous gaps in the literature on Latinos, including a lack of information on the topics of poverty, adolescence, immigration, acculturation, crime and delinquency, social supports, education, and research (Gutiérrez et al., 2000).

When social work professionals are able to access relevant social work research articles about Latinos, it is challenging for social work professionals to adequately assess whether the journal articles are of sound methodological rigor and whether the research was carried out in a culturally competent manner. The expectation is that social work professionals have been educated about research design, methodology, and analysis sufficiently to critically assess the quality of a study, including its research design, findings, and discussion (Fong, 2011). Particularly in instances where research is performed among culturally diverse populations such as the Latino population, there are frequent questions and concerns regarding the degree to which the researcher applied

culturally competent research practices and whether the research process accounted for cultural factors (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Fong & Pomeroy, 2011; Furman, 2009; Gambrill & Pruger, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

The frequent lack of empirical evidence regarding best practice approaches for use with Latinos has largely resulted in the inability to identify culturally specific treatment approaches that are more effective than others when working with Latino clientele (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004). Although information is scarce with respect to specific best practice recommendations for working with Latinos, the literature is replete with demands for social workers to increase their level of cultural competency related to the Latino populations (Balgopal, 2000; Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). Culturally competent social work practice with Latinos is largely considered a continuous process that involves fostering a practitioner's cultural awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge about the culture, values, and practices of the many Latino populations while also developing culturally appropriate practice skills that effectively engage and assist the population (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). The majority of best practice approaches that exist within social work literature are not prescriptive in nature; rather they follow broad-based cultural principles and skills that are commonly implemented when working with Latino populations (Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004; Gutiérrez et al., 2000). Examples of best practice principles and skills frequently used with Latinos involve speaking the client's dominant language (Delgado, 2007; Manoleas & Garcia, 2003), using natural support systems (Delgado, 2007; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Hardy-Fanta, 1986), developing

interpersonal relationships of understanding and respect (Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Manoleas & Garcia, 2003; Organista, 2009), using appropriate self-disclosure (Furman et al., 2009; Gelman, 2004), involving family and community leaders (Bonilla-Santiago, 1989; Delgado, 2007; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009), applying group work (Gelman, 2004; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Hardy-Fanta, 1986), and assessing acculturation factors (Delgado, 2007; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009).

In addition to the best practice principles and skills that have been listed, several social work practice models have been developed to serve as a cultural framework for social workers. These models have been developed in an effort to promote the use of culturally sensitive practices and to increase the effectiveness of social work practice with Latinos (Delgado, 2007; Organista, 2009). Many of the practice models that have been developed for use with Latino populations are, in most cases, conglomerations of principles and recommendations that were designed to work with a broad range of culturally diverse populations and that are based on theoretical models adapted from the fields of anthropology, sociology, and communications (Delgado, 2007; Gelman, 2004; Organista, 2009). For example, Delgado (2007) proposes a framework comprising six practice themes designed to apply the cultural assets of Latinos in order to address the many challenges and barriers faced by the population. The six themes involve the following practices: (1) recognizing the importance of social relationships, (2) using cultural and language preferences, (3) stressing cultural values, (4) incorporating strengths and assets, (5) fostering ethnic identity, and (6) mediating the effects of acculturation. These six practices are based on an ecological perspective that recognizes

the influence of environmental factors on each of the practice themes. The entire framework presented by Delgado (2007) operates under a constant awareness that racism and discrimination affect the barriers and needs of the Latino population and impact all aspects of their lives.

Organista (2009) developed another example of a practice model for use with Latinos in need of social work services. In this particular model, Organista (2009) applies an assessment framework using a 2x4 matrix consisting of two practice levels (generalist and specialized) and four service dimensions (increase service availability and access, assess problems in the social and cultural context, select culturally and socially acceptable interventions, and increase service accountability). The model is based on a synthesis of previous practice model elements and principles and is designed to improve culturally competent social work practice with Latinos by providing a method through which direct and indirect practice behaviors with Latinos can be critiqued according to the four identified service dimensions. In essence, Organista's model is meant as a guide and an evaluative tool to be used by practitioners to assess practice behaviors rather than as a prescriptive set of practices or interventions.

Much of what has been described thus far has represented a review of social work direct practice models that have been used with Latino populations. Many of the principles and skills in these models can be applied to indirect practitioners such as administrators and policy makers (Delgado, 2007; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Hardy-Fanta, 1986; Organista, 2009). Yet a particular area of social work practice in which there is a very limited knowledge and instruction is the area of culturally sensitive research models that are designed to help ensure that research with Latinos is based on

culturally sound methodologies that account for cultural factors and social context (Jani, Ortiz, & Aranda, 2009; Ojeda, Flores, Meza, & Morales, 2011). Performing research with Latinos in a culturally sensitive manner is an essential part of the "social justice mission of social work to make available culturally appropriate services for Latinos and research that accurately reflects their voices" (Jani et al., 2009, p. 193).

Despite the increased number of Latinos in the United States, there continues to be a scarcity of literature on the topic of cultural competency in social work research among Latino populations (Ojeda et al., 2011) and a void of literature about the use of culturally competent research practices by social work researchers and scholars. The use of culturally competent practices during the research process is not only requisite for generating valid and reliable outcomes, but, more importantly, it is an ethical obligation of the social work profession. The following section will address issues related to ethics when researching Latino populations.

Ethics in Social Work Research with Latinos

The ethical responsibility to follow and apply culturally competent standards, coupled with an ever-increasing culturally diverse population, requires social workers to gain greater awareness and understanding of the definition, concepts, and application of cultural competency as an essential framework for social work practice (Anderson & Carter, 2003; Asamoah, 1996; Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009; Estrada, Durlak, & Juarez, 2002; Lum, 2004; National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2001, 2008; D. Sue, 2006; Thyer, Wodarski, Myers, & Harrison, 2010). Even when provided an ethical code to follow, social work practitioners must ultimately use their moral reasoning as the basis of their practice behaviors, and "therefore, one measure of ethical conduct in any

profession is the congruence between what the practitioner is supposed to do and what he or she actually does" (Gambrill & Pruger, 1997, p. 116). Ethics influences not only direct practice regarding when and how social workers should intervene with individuals and families, but also indirect practice involving the profession's duties, responsibilities, and practices toward communities, organizations, social policy, and research (Reamer, 2006; Reiman, 2009).

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics* has gone through multiple revisions over the past 50 years to adapt to cultural changes and to incorporate additional ethical standards for social work practice related to cultural competency (Gray & Webb, 2010; Reamer, 2006; Walker & Staton, 2000). Social work ethics includes the obligation for practitioners to increase their cultural knowledge and skills by incorporating current research on the topic of cultural diversity (Jackson & Samuels, 2011). The NASW *Code of Ethics* includes standards dedicated to ensuring ethical behavior in research practices, and it includes standards regarding the responsibility of direct practitioners to use research evidence in their practice with clients (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). To this point, Furman (2009) stated that "basing social work practice on research evidence is an important ethical mandate" (p. 82) and that "evidence-based practice has largely been accepted as a positive advancement in the profession" (p. 82).

The growing emphasis on direct practitioners basing practice behaviors on research-based evidence further elevates the role and responsibility of social work researchers; the ethical mandate to be aware of and apply ethically based research practices has become essential, because the methodology and outcomes have ethical

consequences for research participants, client populations, and direct practitioners (Fong & Pomeroy, 2011; Furman, 2009; Smith, 2009). As Smith says (2009):

> Good social work research means doing social work research with a confident and robust understanding of the values on which social work itself is predicated. One important way in which to pursue this in the current scientific and managerialist context is by mapping those values into the research process itself; seeing social work research as a continuation of social work practice by other means. (p. 187)

An essential element of social work research is to understand and apply cultural competency guidelines during the research process in order to assure direct practitioners that the research methods and outcomes have accounted for cultural factors (Aisenberg, 2008; Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Walker & Staton, 2000). Regarding the relationship between research and direct social work practice, Fong and Pomeroy (2011) stated:

> [The] Code of Ethics strongly emphasizes the professional behavior and values of social workers—integrity, social justice, human relationships, worth, and dignity—but is less emphatic about grounding practice in scientifically rigorous theory and methods. Though the utility of all social work hinges on the effectiveness of the methods practitioners bring to bear in the field, practitioners are also more likely to trust "practice wisdom" over evidence-based research when choosing among interventions. (p. 1)

Practitioners have an ethical responsibility to apply research evidence. Much of the hesitancy to implement this knowledge calls into question ethical factors related to research practices, such as the frequent exclusion of direct practitioners' clinical expertise and practice wisdom from the development and design of research (Fong & Pomeroy, 2011; Furman, 2009; Gambrill & Pruger, 1997; Smith, 2009). Additionally, there are concerns about how much client input, values, culture, and self-determination are factored into research efforts (Aisenberg, 2008; Fong & Pomeroy, 2011; Furman, 2009; Gambrill & Pruger, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2008, Smith, 2009). To change the perception

of research and its contributions to social work practice and to communities served by social workers, Smith (2009) states that social work researchers should proactively create initial dialogue with service users or research stakeholders. Researchers should involve these stakeholders throughout the research process by asking for input into the process, soliciting feedback, and enlisting their help in promoting and publicizing the research findings.

The implicit ethical factors of research, which include the values, biases, and actions of the researcher as well as the choice of methodology, are frequently accepted as bias free and value neutral, with the research often being left unchecked by peers or insufficiently criticized by scholars (Fong & Pomeroy, 2011; Furman, 2009; Gambrill & Pruger, 1997). Given the mission and values of social work, the idea of bias-free and value-neutral research is not always the reality in social work research. Within social work research literature, scholars have suggested that because the social work profession inherently focuses on social justice and social change, its research efforts should also be practice oriented, with the intent to advocate on behalf of and seek to address the needs of vulnerable populations (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Jani et al., 2009; Smith, 2009). Researchers must try to account for and incorporate into the process the ideas and perspectives of the study population as well as other community stakeholders. Otherwise, the researcher may further marginalize and invalidate the experiences and knowledge of the very population and community that the research is intended to serve (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Jani et al., 2009; Ojeda et al., 2011; Smith, 2009). Aisenberg (2008) states:

> Social workers are committed to the provision and use of treatments and services known to promote the health and well-being of diverse populations of clients. This commitment impels social workers to examine and potentially expand current ideas of what constitutes evidence rather than to assume that scientific

> knowledge is superior to other sources of evidence, including cultural ways of knowing. (p. 297)

Expanding the idea of what constitutes knowledge and how that knowledge benefits the population being studied and accurately represents its views is captured in the concept of what Smith (2009) terms "committed" research. Social work research that is committed embodies many of social work's core values and ethics— client empowerment, social justice, service, dignity, the worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships—as the researcher seeks to involve and share power with the research stakeholders (Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) states that committed research:

> Does not make any claim to be dispassionate or uninvolved, and therefore does not aspire to conventional standards of neutrality or objectivity. Clearly, this perspective demands a rather different way of conceptualizing and operationalizing sound and effective research practice, given that its outcome measures, for example may be quantified in terms of collective change, or enhancements in generalized benefits, such as social capital, according to the perceptions of the participants themselves. In some cases, indeed, it may be the process itself rather than the outcomes which is the source of positive gains for participants. (p. 127)

Social work research involving diverse and vulnerable populations must address the following: the intent of the research as it relates to the interests of the population being studied; how much the population was involved in the research process; the accommodation and consideration of cultural factors such as language, acculturation, traditions, values, and beliefs; the cultural sensitivity of the practice recommendations; and, finally, the potential impact of the research on the population (Aisenberg, 2008; Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Smith, 2009). Performing research and disseminating findings and recommendations without having adequately addressed these cultural considerations raises significant ethical questions about the manner in which

social work generates knowledge and about social work's potential effect upon vulnerable and culturally diverse populations (Aisenberg, 2008; Jani et al., 2009; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Smith, 2009).

As the Latino population continues to experience dramatic growth, there is both a need for and an ethical obligation to conduct further research with the Latino population, particularly from a social work perspective (Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Queralt, 1984). Additional research from a social work perspective can provide practitioners with a deeper awareness of culturally relevant topics and appropriate practice recommendations to improve both service delivery and client outcomes (Delgado, 2007; Gelman, 2004; Organista, 2009).

Achieving the ethical mandate for social work practitioners to practice according to the cultural competence standards and guidelines has become extremely challenging in working with Latinos, as the body of knowledge regarding social work practice with this population is limited in both quantity and scope of practice (Casado et al., 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Jani et al., 2009). In an extensive review of 37 social work journals over a 25-year period, Gutiérrez et al. (2000) found only 181 articles pertaining to Latinos, and only 2% of those articles were related to research efforts with the Latino population. From an ethical perspective, this dearth of social work research literature must be addressed not only to ensure that practitioners are applying culturally competent practices based on research, but also that the research being performed with Latinos is based on culturally competent and ethical practices.

Referring to research with language minorities, among which Latinos form a significant portion, Casado, Negi, and Hong (2012) emphasized that research among this

population is essential to addressing the gaps that exist regarding access to services as well as essential to providing policy makers and agency administrators with sufficient data to make informed decisions and provide culturally competent services. There is a need not only for additional literature and research related to the Latino population but also a need to ensure that the research being performed is based on culturally competent research practices (Casado et al., 2012; Delgado, 2007; Jani et al., 2009; Ojeda et al., 2011). Regarding the development of practice behaviors when working with Latinos, Delgado (2007) states, "There is little disagreement that any attempt at deriving best practices with Latinos must encompass the concept of cultural competence as an integral part of any of these practices" (p. 102).

Performing research in a culturally competent and ethical manner involves what Rubin and Babbie (2008) refer to as "being aware of and appropriately responding to the ways in which cultural factors and cultural differences should influence what we investigate, how we investigate, and how we interpret our findings" (p. 98). Failure to acknowledge cultural factors in research not only affects the methodological rigor of the research and the validity of its outcomes but also may negatively affect the minority group being studied (Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). To this point, Rubin and Babbie (2008) further stated that "some theorists have suggested that when researchers conduct studies in a sexist or a culturally insensitive manner, they are not just committing methodological errors but also going awry ethically" (p. 89). Research efforts that are not performed in a culturally sensitive manner and using culturally competent practices can be potentially harmful in that "their findings may yield implications for action that ignore the needs and realities of minorities, may incorrectly (and perhaps stereotypically)

portray minorities, or may inappropriately generalize in an unhelpful way" (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p. 89).

Therefore, as in any other area of social work practice, social workers performing research with Latinos must follow the ethical mandates to do so in a culturally competent manner, which means that social work researchers must be cognizant of the sociocultural aspects of the Latino population and must ensure that these elements are factored into research efforts and outcome recommendations. Literature calling for increased cultural competency among social work researchers is scarce, and the topic itself is a relatively recent development (Casado et al., 2012; Jani et al., 2009; Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008;). This dissertation seeks to add to the body of literature that expands upon the area of cultural competency in social work research, particularly when working with Latino populations.

Statement of the Problem

Direct and indirect social work practitioners are frequently required to implement evidence-based culturally competent practices with Latinos, but they face the challenge of assessing whether or not researchers applied culturally competent practices during the research process (Casado et al., 2012). This challenge brings with it the assumption and expectation that the social work practitioner has been sufficiently educated about research design and has the ability to critically assess the quality of research methodology and the validity of research findings from a cultural competency perspective (Fong, 2011).

While professionals are generally able to evaluate the basic elements of research design, there are still frequent questions regarding the degree to which research accounts for the participants' culture and whether culturally appropriate research design and

culturally competent methodologies were employed throughout the research process (Fong, 2011). Ensuring that culturally competent research practices were applied during the research process allows for greater validity, improved service delivery, and increased treatment effectiveness (Casado et al., 2012; Marsh et al., 2004; Meleis, 1996; D. Sue, 2006). Research that does not follow the cultural competency standards and guidelines that are expected from direct social work practitioners may ultimately produce knowledge that serves to reinforce stereotypes and practices that have marginalized minority groups, and such research may result in lower quality of care (Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996). The importance of producing research based on culturally competent practices is critical, as research often forms the basis for theory development and practice models (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Marsh et al., 2004; Mokuau et al., 2008; D. Sue, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

The numerous systemic barriers faced by the Latino population necessitate an increasingly prepared social work profession to address the many ethical and social justice issues pertaining to the needs of Latinos (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). Additionally, the social work profession will continue to have increasingly more contact with Latino clients as the Latino population in the United States continues to grow and expand (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). The wide diversity that exists within the Latino population and the unique cultural context of Latino clients necessitate the continued exploration and expansion of culturally competent practice standards and treatment recommendations.

These standards require practitioners to obtain knowledge and understanding about the cultural aspects of their clients and to learn and apply appropriate culturally competent practices based on research. Although there is an ethical obligation to be culturally competent, social work practitioners working with Latinos are placed in a situation in which the existing body of research literature regarding best practice recommendations is relatively scarce and limited in scope.

In addition to the profession's ethical obligation to demonstrate cultural competency in practice, social work practitioners in both direct and indirect practice are increasingly being required by government agencies and funding sources to implement best practice interventions based on research literature rather than on practice wisdom (Aisenberg, 2008; McBeath et al., 2010; Royse et al., 2010). Thus social work practitioners who engage in practice with Latinos are becoming much more dependent on the cultural information and practice recommendations that are being generated and disseminated by social work scholars and researchers. Referring to social work with Latinos, Lum (2005) recognized the important relationship between direct practice and culturally competent research practices in his statement that "successfully working with this population depends on establishing proper training based on culturally and ethnically valid research" (p. 109).

As direct and indirect social work practitioners are asked to implement research-based practice recommendations when working with Latinos, they frequently do so upon the principle of good faith, trusting that researchers have followed cultural competency ethical standards and applied culturally competent research practices throughout the research process. According to the NASW's (2001) standards, the social work profession

should take steps to increase the amount of research and scholarship related to culturally competent social work practice. The purpose of this research study was, through an examination of social work journal scholarship, to expand the body of knowledge regarding culturally competent social work practice and to enhance the education and training of social work practitioners by examining the degree to which social work researchers have applied culturally competent research practices with U.S. Latino populations.

Significance for Social Work

The values and ethics of social work have positioned the profession to be a leader in the area of culturally competent practice (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). For over two decades, the social work profession has implemented numerous ethical and academic standards and guidelines with respect to cultural competency in an effort to enhance the practice knowledge and skills of both its direct and indirect practitioners (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2012; NASW, 2007, 2008). Despite the decades of continuous efforts by the social work profession to address cultural competency in social work practice, there continues to be a demand that cultural competency be advanced in the manner in which it is conceptualized, operationalized, tested, and applied (Saunders, Haskins, & Vasquez, 2015). Without an objective evaluation of the cultural competency practices being applied by social work practitioners—in the case of this study, the practices being used by social work researchers—the profession will remain unaware as to whether cultural competency standards and practices are being followed consistently.

This study aimed to provide the social work profession with important

information regarding the degree to which cultural competency research practices were being applied by social work researchers when performing research on Latino populations within the United States, as reported in scholarly articles found in peer-reviewed social work journals. This information can be used to identify culturally competent research practices that are implemented consistently and to identify cultural competency research practices that are frequently overlooked or that require further attention by social work researchers. This study led to an increased awareness of the culturally competent practices that should be incorporated as part of the research process with Latinos as well as other diverse populations. As social work faculty, students, and researchers become more aware of culturally competent research practices with diverse populations, the potential exists for social work researchers to apply culturally competent practices to their research more frequently. This would enhance the validity of their research findings and further contribute to the development of practice interventions that improve cultural sensitivity and increase effectiveness.

Overview of Research Study

To determine whether and to what degree social work researchers were applying culturally competent research practices when examining Latino populations living in the United States, this research study used a content analysis approach to analyze peer-reviewed social work journal articles published from 1990 to 2012. The content analysis used in this study applied an assessment framework based on eight cultural competency criteria proposed by Meleis (1996). The assessment framework was used to examine the following: (1) how frequently the eight cultural competency criteria were applied in social work journal articles, (2) the historical trends in the application of the eight cultural

competency criteria between 1990 and 2012, and (3) the descriptive nature of the culturally competent practices used by scholars. This researcher and two graduate-level social work students performed a content analysis of peer-reviewed social work journal articles obtained from the 13 highest ranked American social work journals. Upon completion of the content analysis process, the data were reviewed and analyzed using SPSS and NVivo software and the ReCal online tool. A discussion of the content analysis findings, limitations, conclusions, and implications for social work are presented in the final chapters of this document.

Summary

The Latino population has grown considerably in the United States, underscoring the need to focus on the population's overall health and well-being (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The social work profession has been ideally positioned to help address the unique cultural needs of Latino individuals, families, and communities and to advocate for systemic changes to address the many barriers that negatively affect this population (Furman et al., 2009). The purpose of this research study was, through examining social work scholarship, to fulfill the ethical mandate to expand the body of knowledge regarding culturally competent social work research and to enhance the education of social work practitioners by analyzing how much social work researchers have applied culturally competent practices when researching Latino populations in the United States.

This study was significant to the social work profession in that it addressed a critical gap within social work literature regarding the frequency with which social work researchers were applying cultural competency research practices when examining Latino populations in the United States. This information can be used in social work education

to inform social work students, faculty, and practitioners regarding the culturally competent research practices that social work researchers frequently implemented as well as those practices that were frequently overlooked and that require further attention. This study also increased awareness of how social work faculty and doctoral students need to be trained in applying the cultural competency research assessment framework developed for this study. This study shows that faculty need to incorporate the framework into social work research courses in order to enhance the cultural competency of social work research and scholarship with Latinos and, potentially, other culturally diverse populations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a review of the literature regarding the concept of cultural competency and the cultural competency standards of the social work profession. This chapter will also address the theoretical frameworks that provided the rationale for the study and guided the study process. The discussion is organized into six sections: (1) cultural competency, (2) cultural competency research frameworks, (3) the Meleis cultural competency framework, (4) theoretical underpinnings of culturally competent research, (5) co-cultural theory, and (6) co-cultural theory and the Meleis framework. The chapter ends with a summary.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency is founded upon the concept that culture significantly influences an individual's or group's perceptions and understanding of the world and directly impacts the interaction that takes place between clients and professionals (Cross et al., 1989; Guarnaccia & Rodriquez, 1996; Lum, 2004; Nuñez, 2000). For decades, scholars have attempted to clarify and refine the definition and construct of culture in order to understand the factors involved during cultural interactions with clients (Kwong, 2009). Culture, according to Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989), "implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions,

customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group" (p. 7). According to Nuñez (2000),

> Culture shapes how we explain and value our world. Culture is the lens through which we give our world meaning. Culture shapes our beliefs and influences our behaviors about what is appropriate. We are usually unaware that we see the world differently from how others do. It seems to us that we are seeing the world "exactly how it is." Yet each person's perceptions and focal points are the result of reality filtered through his or her cultural background. (p. 1072)

In a similar attempt to define culture, Lum (2004) suggested that "culture reflects the lifestyle practices of particular groups of people who are influenced by a learned pattern of values, beliefs and behavioral modalities" (p. 98).

The previous three definitions are merely a small representation of attempts by scholars to conceptualize a multifaceted concept that becomes increasingly complex when considering the vast amount of unique similarities and differences that exist among individuals, groups, and societies (Lee, 2010).

In professional encounters, culture plays a key role as it influences the perceptions and behaviors of both clients and practitioners (Hernandez, Nesman, Mowery, Acevedo-Polkavich, & Callejas, 2009; Kelly, 2008; Lu et al., 2001; Nuñez, 2000; S. Sue, 2006). A client's culture can shape aspects such as help-seeking behaviors, perceptions toward and interactions with social work professionals and organizations, problem identification, illness perception, system delivery, and treatment approaches (Hernandez et al., 2009; Lee, 2010; Lu et al., 2001; Nuñez, 2000). For practitioners and organizations, culture influences the way clients are perceived, how cultural practices and beliefs are viewed, how problems are defined and diagnosed, and which treatment options or services are implemented (Hernandez et al., 2009; Lee, 2010; Kelly, 2008; Nuñez, 2000). The challenge for professionals in factoring in the concept of culture during client interactions

is the attempt to balance knowledge about a larger culture with client-specific cultural views and behaviors (Lee, 2010). A significant recognition of the role of culture in societal and professional interactions began during the civil rights era together with an increase in the study of this role.

During the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, the acknowledgement of cultural differences and cultural disparities became increasingly prominent as part of the civil rights movement. As a result, many helping professions, such a nursing, psychology, sociology, medicine, and social work, increasingly recognized that a client's culture was integral and that professional interactions should strive for increased cultural and ethnic sensitivity (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Lu et al., 2001; Meleis, 1996; Porter & Villarruel, 1993; Reamer, 2006; D. Sue, 2006). Within the social work profession, scholars such as Solomon (1977), Devore and Schlesinger (1981), and Lum (1986) began to critique the Eurocentric views and biases that had predominately influenced social work education and practice over the years. These and many other scholars sought to promote social work practice that was based on increased attention to the unique culture aspects and lived experiences of individuals and populations from non-White origins (Abrams & Moio, 2009: Logan, 2012; Lu et al., 2001; Saunders et al., 2015). The increased attention to cultural sensitivity and multiculturalism brought about significant changes to social work education in that the Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) adopted academic standards that incorporated cultural diversity into social work curricula (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Bowie, Hall, & Johnson, 2011; Logan, 2012).

During the 1980s and 1990s, the United States began to experience rapid

demographic changes, not only among racial and ethnic groups but among many underserved and disenfranchised groups, including those involving gender, sexuality, religion, and abilities (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Lum, 2004, 2005; McGoldrick et al., 2005; D. Sue, 2006). Asamoah (1996) observed:

> Contributions of the cultural and behavioral theorists challenged social work to move in new directions. Literature published in the 1980s began to draw our attention to the importance of culture in understanding client need, help-seeking behavior and intervention strategies. (p. 1)

Scholars such as Cross et al. (1989) expounded upon the concept of cultural sensitivity and were influential in moving toward the concept of cultural competency (Logan, 2012). Cross et al. (1989) defined cultural competency as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or amongst professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (p. 7). The transition from cultural sensitivity to the concept of competency included an increased awareness of personal limitations and biases, appreciation of both client- and culture-specific factors, and the utilization of culturally appropriate interventions (Green, 1995). Asamoah (1996) posits that the awareness and recognition of diverse cultural groups during the 1980s and 1990s resulted in an increased effort by social work scholars to research diverse populations, which expanded the knowledge base regarding multicultural practice and ultimately contributed to the profession's departure from a one-size-fits-all approach toward "the direction of more appropriately designed services"(p. 2). The shift toward culturally competent social work practice was of such significance that in 1996 the NASW Delegate Assembly formally adopted language regarding cultural competency and cultural sensitivity as part of the NASW *Code of Ethics* (Reamer, 2006; D. Sue, 2006).

The central concept of cultural competency involves the act of converting cultural awareness and knowledge into professional action by developing the necessary abilities and skills to deliver services in an effective manner when working with diverse groups (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Cross et al., 1989; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Meleis, 1996; Reamer, 2006; D. Sue, 2006). In the transition from cultural sensitivity toward cultural competency, several cross-cultural frameworks began to surface in the 1980s. An early reference to a specific cross-cultural framework for working with diverse cultural groups is found in Sue et al. (1982). The cross-cultural concepts put forth by Sue et al. (1982) included the increased awareness of personal and professional biases; an active attempt by professionals to understand and appreciate the unique culture of the client; and, finally, an attempt to develop and apply culturally sensitive interventions when working with clients of diverse cultures. Sue and Sue (1990) later organized the three concepts into culturally competent counseling characteristics and dimensions. From these characteristics and dimensions, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) developed a 3x3 matrix of culturally skilled counselor characteristics and dimensions. The three cultural competency characteristics on the matrix include (1) counselor awareness of assumptions and biases, (2) understanding the worldview of the cultural group, and (3) developing culturally appropriate interventions. Each of the characteristics has three cultural competency dimensions, which include (a) beliefs and attitudes, (b) knowledge, and (c) skills (Sue et al., 1992). This matrix provides nine competency areas that were designed to enhance cultural competency among counselors and provide practitioners with a framework to evaluate whether the characteristics and dimensions were being effectively demonstrated. The competency areas were not formally used as assessment measures;

rather, the framework was considered an active and continuous process of growth and learning (Lu et al., 2001). This cultural competency matrix served as a guide for many changes in education, training, and research (Pope-Davis, Liu, Toporek, & Brittan-Powell, 2001). With regard to the framework's application by researchers, the concepts were primarily directed at studying the cultural competency of counselors and the development of cultural competency assessment measurements rather than used as an evaluative framework for assessing the cultural competency of researchers or one's own research practices (Pope-Davis et al., 2001).

Cross et al. (1989) created another prominent framework for assessing and developing cultural competency. This cultural competency framework was designed to enhance the cultural appropriateness and effectiveness of services provided by direct and indirect service providers and organizations working with racially and culturally diverse populations. This framework outlines a continuum of cultural interactions that range from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency. The framework comprises five essential elements that allow professionals and organizations to assess their level of cultural competency (Cross et al. 1989): (1) valuing diversity, (2) having the capacity for cultural self-assessment, (3) being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (4) having institutionalized cultural knowledge, and (5) having developed adaptations to diversity. Similar to the previously mentioned matrix by Sue et al. (1992), the Cross et al. (1989) cultural competency framework was designed as an analytical tool for professionals and organizations to evaluate and enhance their cultural beliefs, attitudes, and skills along the continuum of cultural competency in an effort to improve service delivery for diverse cultural groups (Lu et al., 2001). Again, similar to the Sue et al.

(1992) matrix, the Cross et al. (1989) cultural competency framework was primarily directed toward direct practice professionals, administrators, and organizations, without a specific mention by its authors as to its possible application among researchers. This author recognizes that although other direct-practice-oriented cultural competency frameworks may have been developed, the Sue et al. (1992) and Cross et al. (1989) models are frequently cited throughout the literature as two foundational frameworks worth noting (Lee, 2010; Lu et al., 2001; Pope-Davis et al., 2001).

Applying cultural competency as a framework involves viewing and assessing the degree to which a client's or community's cultural perspective, cultural context, and cultural factors (i.e., beliefs, values, history, language, customs, needs, and barriers) are incorporated into professional practices, policies, theories, organizational systems, and research (Aisenberg, 2008; Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009; Guarnaccia & Rodriguez, 1996; Kelly, 2008; Lee, 2010; D. Sue, 2006). In addition to considering a client's cultural context, a cultural competency framework also takes into account the potential influence of personal and organizational biases upon practice behaviors and the degree to which ethical issues are addressed (Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009; Kelly, 2008; NASW, 2001; S. Sue, 2006).

As the number of cultural competency models increased throughout the 1990s, the definition and concept of cultural competency continued to be refined. In fact, as a means of further conceptualizing the 1996 ethical mandate for social workers to demonstrate cultural competency in practice, the NASW published a significant document in 2001 titled *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice,* in which it defined cultural competence as:

> The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each. Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. (p. 11)

In the following statement, the NASW (2001) emphasized the essential nature of cultural competency as a key component of social work practice:

> Cultural competence is a vital link between the theoretical and practice knowledge base that defines social work expertise. Social work is a practice-oriented profession, and social work education and training need to keep up with and stay ahead of changes in professional practice, which includes the changing needs of diverse client populations. (pp. 26–27)

In 2007, NASW would later publish indicators, or assessment measures, to accompany the 2001 standards in an effort to provide social work practitioners with a means of determining whether the cultural competency standards are being met. The cultural competency standards were designed for application across the spectrum of social work practice, from direct practice and organizational programs to academic instruction and policy development (Lum, 2004; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; D. Sue, 2006). Despite the comprehensive nature of the 2007 NASW indicators, there are few references regarding the direct application of these indicators to social work research and scholarship.

The mandate to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills associated with these cultural competency standards and to implement culturally competent practices has largely fallen upon direct social work practitioners and human service agencies (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Castex, 1994; Furman et al., 2009; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Walker & Staton, 2000). Yet despite the social work mandates for practitioners to become culturally

competent, the argument that arises is whether cultural competency can ever be achieved or whether the concept should be better viewed as a journey across a continuum of learning (Cross et al., 1989; Saunders et al., 2015). The challenge that has faced the social work profession for many years has been the education of social work practitioners regarding cultural competency and the application of cultural competency in practice (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Whether a social worker can attain culturally competent knowledge and practice skills as part of a university education has frequently been called into question, as critiques of social work programs have challenged both student readiness to deal with such topics as well as instructor preparation and training in the area of cultural competency (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Saunders et al., 2015). To enhance social work instruction in cultural competency, suggestions have ranged from providing students, field instructors, and faculty with additional practice training and courses to incorporating an increased number of experiential activities among culturally diverse groups (Saunders et al., 2015). The following statement by Saunders, Haskins, and Vasquez (2015) effectively summarizes the impact of the long-standing efforts by the social work profession to promote cultural competency:

> Schools of social work, with mission statements, curricula, trainings, and faculty that emphasize the merits of diversity and cultural competency, can easily succumb to the belief that they, as an institution, have attained culturally competent social work education and practice. The danger of such thinking is it can promote complacency among faculty, hinder dialogue regarding diversity issues, and limit the desire for additional learning and self-reflexivity—attributes that are paramount to effective culturally competent practice. (p. 19)

This statement appropriately raises questions as to whether social work professionals are indeed practicing according to the diversity and cultural competency training they have received. Questions about culturally competent social work practice

also extend to the education and training of social work researchers (Danso, 2015). Over the past several decades, the concept of cultural competency has been heavily emphasized among practitioners and organizations while "an emphasis on cultural competence in research in social work and allied fields is a relatively recent development" (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p. 98) and has been relatively unexplored (Jani et al., 2009). Researchers have often assumed that "scientific knowledge is superior to cultural ways of knowing" (Aisenberg, 2008, p. 301). That assumption exacerbates an already existing power differential between researchers and research participants, particularly when the participants are from marginalized or vulnerable populations (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Meleis, 1996). The power differential that is frequently inherent in traditional research designs can foster a situation wherein the researcher's perspective dominates the research interaction and wherein marginalized cultural groups are "often made invisible" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 20). The power differential between a researcher and participants will never be completely equal due to dissimilarities between the two groups in terms of knowledge, privilege, and boundaries. However, a researcher can take active steps to practice in a culturally competent manner by acknowledging that a vertical power differential does exist and subsequently establishing a more horizontal relationship with participants by actively collaborating with them and involving them throughout the research process (Meleis, 1996); in such a situation, participants essentially become "co-researchers" (Orbe, 1998a, p. 236).

Historically, research among minority and oppressed populations often involved questionable ethical practices and culturally insensitive research methods based on Eurocentric values and belief systems that had a detrimental impact upon racial and

ethnic minority populations (Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Sue et al., 1992). The unethical practices and culturally insensitive research methods included the failure to adequately inform participants of study risks, a lack of participant involvement in formulating the research inquiry, insufficient consideration of culture (i.e., language, acculturation, customs, beliefs), a lack of appropriate measurement instruments, biased or prejudiced data analysis and interpretation of findings, and disseminating interventions as evidence-based practices for use with diverse populations without considering participants' cultural context and cultural factors (Aisenberg, 2008; Jani et al., 2009; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Stanhope, Solomon, Pernell-Arnold, Sands, & Bourjolly, 2005). Culturally competent research practice is intended to address the unethical and culturally insensitive methods that have been used in the development of knowledge and practice (Gil & Bob, 1999; Meleis, 1996; Porter & Villarruel, 1993).

In an effort to describe the nature of culturally competent research, the Harvard Catalyst (2010) provided the following definition:

> Cultural competence in research is the ability of researchers and research staff to provide high quality research that takes into account the culture and diversity of a population when developing research ideas, conducting research, and exploring applicability of research findings. Cultural competence in research plays a critical role in study design and implementation processes, including the development of research questions and hypotheses, outreach and recruitment strategies, consent activities, data collection protocols, analyzing and interpreting research findings, drawing conclusions and presenting the results. (p. 6)

Factoring in the culture and diversity of study participants throughout the research process (i.e., problem formulation, participant recruitment, research setting determination, methodology selection, and interpretation and distribution of results) is widely supported throughout the literature on culturally competent research (Aisenberg, 2008; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006;

Wilson & Neville, 2009).

From the initial stages of the research effort, researchers should ensure that the study is relevant to and meets the needs of the group members or population being studied (Brach & Fraser, 2000; Harvard Catalyst, 2010; Jacobson, Chu, Pascucci, & Gaskins, 2005; Meleis, 1996; Shiu-Thornton, 2003). The relevance of the research study should reflect the needs of the particular community based on the members' perceptions and feedback (Aisenberg, 2008; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). In addition to understanding the needs of the community, researchers should seek insight into the group members' beliefs or possible concerns regarding academic research (Aisenberg, 2008; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Identifying possible concerns or hesitancies of the cultural group provides an opportunity for researchers to adapt the research process in a way that adequately addresses the group's concerns (Meleis, 1996; Suh, Kagan, & Strumpf, 2009; Wilson & Neville, 2009). Frequently, researchers can effectively address the concerns and hesitancies of culturally diverse populations by developing a strong rapport, demonstrating cultural sensitivity, and creating an open dialogue wherein the group members feel respected and comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences (Meleis, 1996; Suh et al., 2009; Wilson & Neville, 2009). A portion of developing rapport with participants is the acknowledgement of their contribution by providing culturally appropriate forms of compensation for their time and effort (Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Ojeda et al., 2011). Ensuring that the various stakeholders involved in the research effort achieve their research goals or benefit from the study is an essential component of culturally competent research (Meleis, 1996; Ojeda et al., 2011)

The researcher should also ensure that other relevant aspects of the research process are addressed prior to carrying out the research process. For example, researchers and staff should have sufficient knowledge, understanding, and training regarding the participants' specific cultural context and cultural factors, if possible from the community members themselves (Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006). Cultural competency includes considering the potential barriers and needs of the participants that may affect their ability to participate in the research process, such as transportation needs, time constraints, family responsibilities or childcare, and communication barriers (Meleis, 1996; Saltus, 2006). In cases where participants speak foreign languages, researchers must ensure that culturally appropriate methods of communication are available and provided by qualified bilingual and bicultural staff members (Casado et al., 2012; Gil & Bob, 1999; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001). The appropriate use of communication also extends to the utilization of measurement instruments and testing appropriate for the cultural group being studied. Researchers should use measurement instruments that have been developed and standardized for use with the particular cultural group. In cases where instrumentation has not been developed, researchers should take the necessary steps to develop tools that take into consideration the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the group (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Porter & Villarruel, 1993; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Additionally, informed consent procedures should be carried out in a culturally competent manner that allows group members to fully understand the research process and adequately address concerns about issues of privacy and safety (Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006).

A frequently cited aspect of culturally competent research is the researcher's and staff's awareness of their personal biases, attitudes, and beliefs throughout the research process, because the potential impact that these elements have upon the research process and research outcomes is substantial (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006). Additionally, any ethical issues or dilemmas should be acknowledged and addressed appropriately during the research (Aisenberg, 2008; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). As a research study comes to its completion, the research findings should be interpreted and analyzed in a culturally sensitive manner, which can include being focused on strengths, considering the cultural and socioeconomic context of the outcomes, and acknowledging research limitations and biases (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Saltus, 2006). Conducting research according to culturally competent methods allows for the advancement of knowledge that accurately reflects the culture of the population being studied. Such research can result in the development of practice recommendations that providers can use to effectively meet the needs of the cultural group (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Wilson & Neville, 2009). In an attempt to better conceptualize and operationalize the application of culturally competent methods, many scholars from among the helping professions have developed cultural competency frameworks specific to research practice. The following section will address several of the cultural competency research frameworks that have been designed to enhance the use of culturally competent practices by researchers.

Cultural Competency Research Frameworks

While numerous cultural competency frameworks were being developed during the 1980s for direct practitioners and organizations, there was a similar effort among the helping professions to develop research frameworks that would help ensure cultural competency during the research process (Rogler, 1989). At the time, many helping professions, including medicine, nursing, social work, psychology, and sociology, as well as the National Institutes of Health, began questioning the cultural appropriateness of the theoretical models and research methods that were being used with minority populations (Porter & Villarruel, 1993). Similar to Rogler (1989), nursing scholars Porter and Villarruel (1993) believed that researchers frequently assumed the cultural universality of the concepts and theories being used to guide their research efforts and often carried out research efforts and interpreted findings based on a monoculture perspective. According to Porter and Villarruel (1993), culturally sensitive research needed to move toward a more rigorous method of scientific research that demonstrates cultural sensitivity throughout the entire research process.

In an effort to move toward increased cultural sensitivity and rigor during the research process, Porter and Villarruel (1993) developed a cultural sensitivity guideline for the design, conduct, and critique of research with African Americans and Latinos. This guideline for culturally sensitive research was founded on the premise that empirical knowledge directs the development of theory and practice behaviors and, therefore, researchers must ensure the integrity and social relevance of scientific inquiry by closely critiquing the entire research process from the initial theoretical framework and design to the methodology and analysis of the findings. Six major areas of the research process are

included in the guideline: (1) framework, (2) sample, (3) measurement, (4) investigator, (5) analysis, and (6) discussion. The guideline is structured as a series of questions designed to cause researchers to critique the cultural sensitivity of the six areas of the research process rather than as a mandate with a specific set of prescriptive actions. For example, in the area of framework, the guideline suggests that the researcher address whether the theoretical or conceptual frameworks are relevant to the population being studied (Porter & Villarruel, 1993). The researcher should also be able to identify evidence that the theoretical concepts account for culture and ethnicity. The Porter and Villarruel (1993) guideline allowed for a broad critique of the research process, although the guideline was designed for use with African American and Latino populations and did not specify how it was determined to be reliable or valid for those specific cultural groups (Jacobson et al., 2005). The guideline does suggest that in cases of a heterogeneous sample, the researcher should not simply aggregate the data, rather, the data should be analyzed separately and by individuals who are familiar with the group's context and culture so as to accurately reflect and maintain the perspectives of the group members. The guideline, however, does not specifically address the role of the cultural group members during other phases of the research process or the extent to which the participants should be involved in the research design or the decision-making efforts.

Since the Porter and Villarruel (1993) research guideline, several other cultural competency research frameworks have been developed for researchers, many of which have been developed by scholars from the nursing profession. For example, nursing scholars Papadopoulus and Lees (2002) developed a cultural competence model based on cultural generic (etic) and cultural specific (emic) concepts. The model was designed to

increase a researcher's awareness about the dynamic intercultural processes that occur as a researcher interacts with culturally diverse groups. This particular model heavily emphasizes the need for researchers to be keenly aware and knowledgeable of the many etic and emic elements that should be actively considered by researchers throughout the research process. Although the authors provide a strong argument for researcher competency at both the etic an emic levels, the actual description regarding implementation of the framework is conceptually complex, vague in its operationalization of the concepts, and lacks a specific mention of participants' involvement and roles during the research process.

In another example, researchers Gil and Bob (1999) used the American Psychological Association's guidelines for working with culturally diverse populations to identify four areas of ethical concern that should be addressed in research with minority populations. Using cultural research literature to address the ethical areas, Gil and Bob (1999) developed a series of cultural competency criteria to help guide researchers to address the ethical areas in a culturally competent manner. This model promotes awareness of the need for community members to be involved in identifying research topics and monitoring the research process as well as awareness of the importance of researchers being culturally diverse and using culturally competent measures. Some of the limitations of the Gil and Bob (1999) criteria include the limited use of the cultural literature of the time to expand upon their proposed criteria and the failure of the criteria to account for the cultural context of the participants/community in the design of the research and the interpretation of the findings.

In research with Asian immigrants, nursing scholars Suh, Kagan, and Strumpf

(2009) adapted the culturally competent model of care developed by Campinha-Bacote (1994) for application within research. The Campinha-Bacote (1994) model is based on five major constructs: cultural awareness, knowledge, skills, encounters, and desire. Suh et al. (2009) found this model and its concepts to be effective in carrying out culturally competent research with Asian populations. While Suh et al. (2009) argue the model's successful application within a research setting, the authors' observations and recommendations regarding future research practices with Asian populations contained frequent statements that appeared to generalize and potentially reinforce common stereotypes about the behaviors, personal interactions, and communication of Asian populations. While the Campinha-Bacote (1994) model emphasizes researcher self-awareness of personal biases and the need for self-improvement in the areas of cultural knowledge and skills, there is little mention of the participants' role in or contribution to the research process.

Wilson and Neville (2009), from the fields of nursing and social services, developed a cultural competency framework for working with vulnerable populations by suggesting that researchers account for the 4 Ps during the research process. The 4 Ps represent the principles of power, partnership, participation, and protection, which, when taken into consideration and applied during the research process, create a culturally safe space for dialogue and negotiations to take place between researcher and participant. The cultural considerations that are incorporated into the model are well defined, and the authors provided many relevant examples of its application. However, the authors primarily focused on the their extensive work using the model with Maori populations in New Zealand, and very little reference was made to the model's broader use among other

vulnerable populations.

Counseling psychology scholar Fontes (1998) proposed a series of ethical and cross-cultural guidelines for performing research on family violence. These guidelines address eight ethical areas that should be considered by cross-cultural researchers when attempting to perform studies on family violence. The eight ethical areas include the researcher's attention to power imbalances, informed consent procedures, properly defining the study sample, familiarity with the culture(s), composition of the research team, culturally sensitive research methods, direct benefits for participation, and the risk of harm from participation. The primary limitation of these guidelines is that the ethical areas are designed specifically for studying family violence; the practice examples provided within each of the areas are specific to topics of violence. However, when considered in a general research context, the eight ethical areas are certainly applicable to cross-cultural research and are worth consideration as part of a framework for performing culturally competent research.

Social work scholars Casado, Negi, and Hong (2012) developed a culturally competent methodological approach for research with language minorities by expanding upon the cultural competency research framework developed by nursing scholar Meleis (1996). Casado et al. (2012) found the eight cultural competency criteria of the Meleis (1996) cultural competency research framework to be well aligned with social work values and practices. In the expansion of the Meleis (1996) framework, Casado et al. (2012) offer practical strategies to involve language minorities throughout the entire research process and address the methodological challenges that occur when working with language minority populations, particularly in the areas of research-problem

formulation, recruitment and retention, measurement, and dissemination. Although social work scholars Casado et al. (2012) expanded upon the cultural competency criteria by developing additional strategies when performing research with language minorities, a recent search of the literature does not show that the particular strategies developed by Casado et al. (2012) have been further studied or expanded upon. Additionally, there is no evidence that social work scholars have applied Meleis's (1996) eight cultural competency criteria to guide, evaluate, or assess the use of culturally competent research or scholarship.

The Meleis (1996) cultural competency research framework was developed as an analytic tool to assess the cultural competency of research and scholarship. The framework consists of eight cultural competency criteria: (1) contextuality, (2) relevance, (3) communication, (4) awareness of power and identity, (5) disclosure, (6) reciprocation, (7) empowerment, and (8) time. The Meleis (1996) framework has been applied by numerous other researchers in order to evaluate culturally competent research practices, to develop culture-specific measurement tools, and to assess the cultural competency of scholarship performed with culturally diverse populations (Casado et al., 2012; Jacobson et al., 2005; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Im, Meleis, & Lee, 1999; Saltus, 2006). The Meleis (1996) framework is significant due to its comprehensive integration of the cultural competency research concepts and practices described throughout this chapter. The framework also has a seamless application to social work as its concepts effectively align with many social work values and practices such as the identification of power differentials, consideration of social context, and promoting client empowerment (Casado et al., 2012). The following section provides a detailed description of the Meleis (1996)

cultural competency framework and the eight cultural competency criteria.

The Meleis Cultural Competency Framework

In the mid-1990s, following years of growth among ethnic minority populations in the United States, many professions, including nursing and social work, developed and incorporated cultural competency practice standards and guidelines into their respective codes of ethics (Meleis, 1996; Reamer, 2006; D. Sue, 2006). Based on the cultural literature at the time, nursing scholar Meleis (1996) developed a cultural competency framework that outlined specific criteria for assessing the credibility and rigor of both research and academic scholarship in the development of culturally competent knowledge. The underpinnings of the framework address the marginalization of cultural groups and the importance of acknowledging the standpoint and voices of oppressed groups. Meleis (1996) argues that academic research and scholarship can contribute to the marginalization of vulnerable populations if such scholarship does not demonstrate cultural competency in a manner that is both substantive and rigorous. Additionally, research and scholarship should acknowledge the unique social positioning of marginalized groups and be inclusive of the perspectives, ideas, and voices of marginalized group members as part of scholarly inquiry (Meleis, 1996). To this point, Meleis (1996) contends that the marginalization of cultural groups ultimately affects the quality and type of care delivered by professionals due to the lack of input by these groups in the development of academic knowledge and treatment protocols.

In an effort to enhance the cultural competency of research with culturally diverse populations, Meleis (1996) developed eight criteria for "assessing the credibility of culturally competent scholarship" with the intent to ensure that the knowledge base and

culturally based scholarship "[reflect] the needs and services offered to diverse populations" (p. 3). The literature on culturally competent research practices frequently describes culturally appropriate methods and methodologies, such as increased participant involvement, appropriate measurement tools, and appropriate communication methods (Ojeda et al., 2011; Porter & Villarruel, 1993; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). However, within the literature few instances of actual criteria have been developed for assessing the use of culturally competent research practices (Casado et al., 2012; Jacobson et al., 2005; Porter & Villarruel, 1993). Researchers across multiple disciplines have used the Meleis (1996) framework in previous research studies as a valuable analytical framework to assess the cultural competency of research and scholarship with diverse cultural groups, including Latino populations (Casado et al., 2012; Im, Meleis, & Lee, 1999; Jacobson et al., 2005; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Mill & Ogilvie, 2003; Saltus, 2006). The use of the eight cultural competency criteria among a variety of culturally diverse groups, along with the comprehensive nature of the conceptual framework, provides a sound analytic tool for assessing the cultural competency of research performed with culturally diverse populations.

Eight Cultural Competency Criteria

The eight cultural competency criteria of the Meleis (1996) framework are considered to be equally important elements in culturally competent research. Therefore, the following descriptions of the criteria are addressed in the order described in Meleis (1996) and not according to importance: (1) *Contextuality* involves a knowledge and awareness of participants' lifestyles and environment, which includes their current economic and sociopolitical situations as well as historical context. Accounting for

participants' context is crucial throughout the research process, as it can shape research questions, influence participants' responses, and affect the results of the research. A failure to acknowledge participants' context could lead to or give cause for further marginalization or stereotyping of a group. (2) *Relevance* involves ensuring that research efforts are meaningful and beneficial to a population's well-being and that the research addresses important issues related to the population's social welfare as defined by participants. Evidence of applying relevance in research includes the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the process of defining and coming to understand the relevant needs and issues facing the population. (3) *Communication* includes using the most effective or preferred form of communication according to the population being studied. Considerations within the communication criterion range from the appropriate use of language and symbols to physical and mental capacity to fill out forms and complete tasks. Close attention should be paid to the linguistic accuracy of interpreters and interviewers, measurement tools, forms, and materials to help ensure that understanding was achieved and that the data accurately reflect participant responses. (4) *Awareness of identity and power* involves a cognizance on the part of the researcher that a power differential exists between researchers and participants. The researcher then makes a concerted effort to reduce this gap by facilitating a process and atmosphere that demonstrate a sense of collaboration with participants in which they are able to assist with the development and shaping of the research. Effectively addressing power differentials may include sharing authority and ownership of the research process and the study outcomes. (5) *Disclosure* involves an effort on the part of the researcher to ensure privacy, build trust, and understand elements of secrecy that exist among vulnerable and

diverse populations. The researcher should demonstrate and explain efforts to build trust and rapport, and an assessment should be carried out to determine whether participants felt comfortable to respond openly and freely to questions. (6) *Reciprocation* involves making every attempt to achieve the goals of both the researcher and participants. Reciprocation is achieved when efforts to clearly identify the goals and expectations of both parties are documented and when there is evidence that the goals were assessed throughout the research process. (7) *Empowerment* is accomplished when the researcher has assisted participants in learning new skills or knowledge that can be used to change their environment and improve their wellbeing. Researchers should document efforts to enable participants to take action because of the research and/or learned skills that contributed to improving their welfare. (8) *Time* is an element of cultural competency by which researchers make necessary accommodations during the research process to build rapport and trust and to accomplish both the researchers' and participants' goals. Culturally competent researchers should demonstrate a flexible use of time and should develop the research process around the participants' cultural concept of time and availability rather than strict schedules, time constraints, and standard number of visits. Awareness and recognition of time and how time was considered during the research process are indicators of cultural competency in research.

This author found Meleis's (1996) eight cultural competency criteria to be inclusive of the culturally competent concepts and practices commonly mentioned throughout the literature on cultural competency, and found these criteria to effectively address the role of the cultural group within the research process. The framework's eight criteria also addressed many of the deficits found within other cultural competency

frameworks, calling for participants' and community members' active involvement and empowerment throughout the research process, recognizing power and identity differences, making a case for a study's relevance and its benefits for all stakeholders involved, and considering a study's impact on participants' daily lives. Given the eight cultural competency criteria's comprehensive nature, their previous use in examining professional scholarship, and their alignment with social work values and practices, this author determined that the Meleis (1996) framework could be expanded upon and adapted to analyze social work research and scholarship for evidence of culturally competent practice with Latino populations in the United States. The application of the eight cultural competency criteria as an analytical framework for evaluating culturally competent research and the framework's expansion as an assessment tool for use in this study to assess the cultural competency of social work research is discussed in the following section.

Application of the Eight Cultural Competency Criteria

Meleis (1996) stated that "the eight proposed criteria for ensuring rigor and credibility of culturally competent scholarship can be used as guidelines for the research process and as criteria in evaluating the credibility of culturally competent scholarship" (p. 14). Mendias and Guevara (2001) applied the eight criteria to assess their previous research efforts to "provide a relevant and objective review of our process and a means for identifying future course improvement" (p. 256) and further stated that the framework "allows others to evaluate or review the work by using the same criteria or to replicate the process" (p. 257). Mendias and Guevara (2001) were the first to operationalize the eight criteria into a format that could be applied as an evaluation method to analyze the extent

to which culturally competent research practices have been implemented during a research process. To operationalize the criteria, Mendias and Guevara (2001) developed what they termed "application measures" for each criterion based on the descriptions provided in Meleis (1996). These application measures identified specific research processes or research practices that would indicate the use of the cultural competency criteria during the study. Their attempts to operationalize the criteria proved to be particularly challenging as they "experienced some difficulty separating certain aspects of one criterion from others" (Mendias & Guevara, 2001, p. 264). The difficulty experienced by Mendias and Guevara (2001) may have occurred partly because of the ad hoc nature of their analysis to identify the criteria they used during their study. Their analysis may have been improved had the criteria been better defined and operationalized prior to the study.

In 2005, Jacobson and her colleagues performed a content analysis on 167 nursing articles that studied race, ethnicity, and culture using the eight cultural competency criteria to measure the application of cultural competency in nursing scholarship. As a way to measure the application of the criteria, Jacobson, Chu, Pascucci, and Gaskins (2005) provided article reviewers with definitions and examples of each criterion to then review each article for textual evidence that confirmed whether the criteria were used in the research. The results of the study showed that on average, the nursing articles applied only three of the eight Meleis criteria, with the most frequently used criteria being contextuality, relevance, and communication. Articles that applied four or more of the Meleis criteria were found to be "distinctly superior" (p. 207) to the articles that used fewer criteria. A concern among the researchers was the relatively low frequency with

which the studies applied the cultural competency criteria of identity and power, disclosure, empowerment, and time. Jacobson et al. (2005) concluded that the Meleis criteria "deserve wider use by research consumers, reviewers, and investigators" (p. 207) to further the development of culturally competent research practices and subsequent practice interventions.

This current research study took into consideration the combined experiences of both Mendias and Guevara (2001) and Jacobson et al. (2005) and sought to expand upon and enhance the application of the eight criteria in several ways. First, the design of this study further operationalized and defined each of the criteria prior to the journal article analysis, which allowed for greater objectivity of the criteria's application. Second, this study developed multiple subcriteria measures for each of the eight criteria and operationalized the measures in a manner that provided for mutually exclusive categories. Using multiple mutually exclusive subcriteria measurements provided greater accuracy and understanding about the types of culturally competent research processes and practices that were being conducted. Third, this study used both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to triangulate the data in an effort to understand the degree to which social work researchers applied cultural competency practices during the research process and to gain insight into the description of the cultural competency practices. Lastly, this study applied a theoretical framework as a means of understanding and interpreting the data.

Although the Meleis (1996) cultural competency criteria aligned with the purposes of this current study, a critique of the many cultural competency research frameworks—including the Meleis (1996) framework—found a significant gap: the

concepts and practices proposed in the research frameworks were not accompanied by theoretical frameworks from which to understand and interpret the research practices and outcomes. The incorporation of an interpretive theoretical framework into the Meleis (1996) framework was critical in order to address the lack of a specific theoretical framework from which the criteria were developed and to provide insight into the criteria's usage as elements of culturally competent research. The following section addresses the theoretical underpinnings and frameworks from which the concepts and practices comprising cultural competency research frameworks were derived, and which could be used as possible interpretive frameworks.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Culturally Competent Research

Over the past several decades, scholars across multiple professions have tried to conceptualize and operationalize the concept of cultural competency and have generated a vast amount of literature regarding culturally sensitive and culturally competent practice. The increase in literature addressing the topic of cultural competency has led to hundreds of definitions and dozens of frameworks related to culturally competent practice that have lacked specificity and have raised questions and caused confusion over what concepts, practices, and theoretical foundations most accurately constitute culturally competent practice (Brach & Fraser, 2000; Kwong, 2009; Lee, 2010). The helping professions' reliance upon theoretical work from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, feminist studies, economics, law, education, cross-cultural psychology, political science, and communications has contributed to this vast number of definitions and concepts that form the theoretical underpinnings of cultural competency (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Asamoah, 1996; Casado et al., 2012; Papadopoulos & Lees, 2002;

Ponterotto, 1992; Porter & Villarruel, 1993). The numerous theoretical frameworks generated by such a vast array of disciplines have influenced multicultural practice among direct and indirect practitioners, including the manner in which research is performed with diverse cultures (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Casado et al., 2012; Ponterotto, 1992; Pope-Davis et al., 2001). Addressing the gap between the concepts and practices of cultural competency research and the identification of theoretical frameworks is essential. The selection of a theoretical framework directly influences and guides several significant aspects of the research process, such as the nature of the relationship between the researcher and participant, the influence of personal values on the research, the design and methodology of the research, and the interpretation of the findings (Ponterotto, 2002). Additionally, the use of a theoretical framework in conjunction with the cultural competency research framework allows for the further refining of the research framework as well as the advancement of the theory itself. Although many cultural competency research frameworks fail to mention the theoretical underpinnings from which the concepts and practices have been conceptualized, the research practices and outcomes can be framed and interpreted according to many theoretical frameworks.

A significant portion of culturally competent research concepts and practices draw from multiple theoretical frameworks such as critical theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, and racial identity theories in order to address the structural inequalities, oppression, marginalization, disempowerment, and institutional racism encountered by diverse cultural groups (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Douglas & Pacquiao, 2010; Ponterotto, 2002; Pope-Davis et al., 2001). Culturally competent research concepts and practices that focus on the lived experiences, cultural factors, and unique perspectives of diverse

cultural groups have theoretical underpinnings from such frameworks as grounded theory, constructivist theories, muted group theory, standpoint theory, and co-cultural theory (Ardener, 2005; Hartsock, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Orbe, 1996; Ponterotto, 2002; Pope-Davis et al., 2001; Swigonski, 1993). Each of the theories that have been mentioned, as well as numerous other theories that influence culturally competent research practice, could serve as potential theoretical frameworks to be used in conjunction with the cultural competency criteria framework as a means of interpreting the study outcomes and further developing the framework's usage as a model for guiding culturally competent research practice.

The selection of the Meleis (1996) cultural competency criteria as the cultural competency framework for this study was based on its close alignment with social work values and practices. However, as with the other research frameworks, there was no specific mention of the framework's theoretical underpinnings; therefore, the selection of a theoretical framework to guide the design, methodology, and interpretation of the research findings was critical for this study. The selection of a theoretical framework to be used in conjunction with Meleis's (1996) analytical framework proved to be somewhat challenging, because the analytical framework's eight cultural competency criteria addressed a broad spectrum of cultural competency concepts and practices, ranging from the power and identity differential between researchers and participants to acknowledging the cultural context and lived experiences of the participants. The intent of this research was to analyze social work researchers' use of culturally competent practices with Latino populations in the United States, so the selection of a theoretical framework had to address the dynamic interactions between two distinct cultures with a distinct power

differential as well as to consider cultural factors during the research process. Upon reviewing the many theoretical frameworks that could be applied to address the concepts included in the Meleis (1996) framework, this author found co-cultural theory to be the theoretical framework that effectively addressed the concepts and practices included in the eight cultural competency criteria and that aligned with the purposes of this study. The following section describes the background, theoretical underpinnings, and constructs of co-cultural theory as the theoretical framework for this study.

Co-Cultural Theory

During the mid-1990s as the Meleis (1996) cultural competency research framework was being developed, communication scholar Mark Orbe constructed co-cultural theory. Orbe (2005) developed co-cultural theory in an effort to further explore and understand the unique cultural identities, experiences, and behaviors of marginalized or nondominant cultural groups. Efforts to understand marginalized cultural groups have been met with many complexities due to the hierarchical nature of the interaction and communication practices and behaviors that exist between members of marginalized groups and members of dominant groups, including academic scholars (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1996). Cultural interactions and communication practices between nondominant and dominant cultural groups have been extensively documented and researched using co-cultural theory (Burnett et al., 2009; Cohen & Avanzino, 2010 ; Lapinski & Orbe, 2007; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008).

According to Orbe (1998c), "culture and communication are inextricably linked" (p. 2). The perceptions, communication practices, and lived experiences of marginalized

groups, or co-cultures, are frequently silenced within the context of dominant cultures and societal structures (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Co-cultural theory includes the use of the term *co-culture* in order to "avoid the negative or inferior connotations of past descriptions (i.e., subculture) while acknowledging the great diversity of influential cultures that simultaneously exist in the United States" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 2). Co-cultural theory was developed through studies of interethnic interactions and communication among marginalized groups in the United States (Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Orbe, 1996, 1998a, 1998b). The theory has been used to explore the cultural identities of a vast number of co-cultural groups, including various racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, women, victims of rape, gays, lesbians, college students, low socioeconomic status groups, people with disabilities, and international cultures (Burnett et al., 2009; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Lapinski & Orbe, 2007; Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008).

Co-cultural theory is an eclectic framework grounded in the theories of feminist scholars related to the concepts of power, culture, and communication (Orbe, 1998b), specifically muted group theory (Ardener, 1975, 2005; Kramarae, 1981, 2005) and standpoint theory (Adler & Jermier, 2000; Harding, 1987, 2004; Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1987). As a means of methodologically uniting the two underlying theories, co-cultural theory incorporates a phenomenological approach that is meant to aid in understanding the subjective experiences of group members (Orbe, 1996, 1998b). In order to provide additional insight into and context for co-cultural theory, the subsequent section will present a summary of the theoretical underpinnings of co-cultural theory—namely, muted group and standpoint theories. It is important to note that both theories have been

extensively documented and discussed in the literature (Burnett et al., 2009; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Lapinski & Orbe, 2007; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Orbe, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008).

Muted Group Theory

Muted group theory was originally developed in the late 1960s by anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener and was based on their observations of societal groups "for whom self-expression was constrained" (Ardener, 2005, p. 51). The anthropological premise of muted group theory provides insight into the hierarchical power structures that exist within societies and the subsequent silencing effect that occurs as "those groups that function at the top of the social hierarchy determine to a great extent the communication system of the entire society" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 4). As dominant societal groups marginalize and effectively mute the lived experiences, ideas, and oral narratives of nondominant groups from becoming part of the dominant culture, they are able to effectively reinforce the existing power structure and control the communication that occurs within a given society (Ardener, 1975, 2005; Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Orbe, 1998b; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Very early studies applied muted group theory to small group samples that included petty criminals, schoolchildren, and Celts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the theory became more closely associated with women's studies and was used by many feminist scholars across numerous fields of study (Ardener, 2005; Kramarae, 2005; Wall & Gannon-Leary, 1999). Muted group theory helps explain the diverse ways in which women are kept at a disadvantage due to men's power and influence over language creation and expression as well as over which discourses take place and which ideas are included in those discourses (Ardener, 1975,

2005; Kramarae, 2005; Wall & Gannon-Leary, 1999). Kramarae (2005) states:

> In many situations, women are more constrained than are men in what they can say, when, and with what results. Accepted language practices have been constructed primarily by men in order to express their experiences. This means that women are constrained (muted). (p. 55)

By the 1990s, muted group theory extended well beyond examining gender differences and was applied to myriad marginalized groups, including African-American men (Orbe, 1994) and other groups based on factors such as race, ethnicity, age, class, and disability (Kramarae, 2005; Orbe, 1998c). Muted group theory eventually played a crucial role in the development of co-cultural theory in that it accounted for the communication of nondominant groups from the perspective of those without power (Orbe, 1998c).

Standpoint Theory

Along with muted group theory, standpoint theory serves as an additional theoretical foundation from which co-cultural theory was developed. Originally based on the works of Hegel, Marx, and Du Bois, standpoint theory was used to examine the differing standpoints among socioeconomic classes (Harnois, 2010; Hekman, 1997). In the 1970s and 1980s, feminist scholars advanced standpoint theory as they applied the theory to gender and race (Harding, 1987, 2004; Harnois, 2010; Hartsock, 1983; Hill Collins, 1986; Smith, 1987). Standpoint theory challenges the conventional development of knowledge from a singular objective standpoint and argues that this form of knowledge is limited because of its failure to account for the unique perspectives and experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups (Harding, 1987, 2004; Harnois, 2010; Hartsock, 1983; Swigonski, 1993). The basic premise of standpoint theory contends that

"the less powerful members of society experience a different reality as a consequence of their oppression" (Swigonski, 1993, p. 173). Standpoint theory also argues that within marginalized groups there are similarities and differences (Hill Collins, 1986) and that "not all group members (women, people of color) occupy the same standpoint" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 5).

When standpoint theory is applied in scholarly inquiry, several basic tenets exist. First, researchers must recognize how their epistemological assumptions guide their approaches to scholarly inquiry and how their unique standpoints influence the entire research process (Adler & Jermier, 2005). Second, researchers must begin by understanding the circumstances surrounding the social positioning of the marginalized group members and make their lived experiences and identified issues the central foci of the scholarly inquiry (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Orbe, 1998c; Swigonski, 1993). Third, researchers must include the perspectives and experiences of the marginalized groups as a meaningful part of the research process and in the development of knowledge (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Orbe, 1998c; Swigonski, 1993). Lastly, research based on standpoint theory should ultimately seek to improve the circumstances of marginalized groups and advocate for social change and social justice (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Swigonski, 1993).

Based on the conceptual frameworks of standpoint and muted group theory, Orbe (1998b) states that there are five epistemological premises of co-cultural theory. First, each society has a hierarchical structure that privileges some groups over others. In the United States, these privileged groups include men, Caucasian Americans, members of the upper class, heterosexuals, and able-bodied individuals. Second, those in privileged groups tend to possess positions of power and maintain their power by reinforcing

communication systems that reflect and promote their lived experiences and perceptions. Third, communication structures controlled by dominant groups hinder the progress of groups whose experiences and perspectives do not align with those of the dominant group. Fourth, many co-cultural groups will share similar societal positions, in which their experiences, values, and beliefs are marginalized. Co-cultural groups that are frequently marginalized and underrepresented in the dominant structure include women, racial and ethnic minorities, those of diverse sexual orientations, people with disabilities, individuals of a lower socioeconomic status, and immigrant groups. The fifth and final premise is that co-cultural groups learn to adopt many of the communication behaviors of the dominant system in order to function within society and to achieve some level of success within the dominant structure.

An effective methodology for gaining insight into the unique standpoints of marginalized group members is the use of phenomenological approaches that seek to examine group members' subjective experiences and perspectives. Co-cultural theory applies a phenomenological framework to increase understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of co-cultural groups and to support observation of the communication interactions that take place as co-cultural groups navigate within their social surroundings (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Lapinski & Orbe, 2007; Loehwing & Motter, 2012). A phenomenological approach provides co-culture members the opportunity to use communication strategies that involve a much more natural expression of their cultural experiences and give voice to their perspectives, which typically go unheard by dominant cultural groups (Burnett et al., 2009; Loehwing & Motter, 2012). Orbe (1998c) emphasizes the importance of a phenomenological approach by stating, "in

short, phenomenology encourages researchers to acknowledge persons as multidimensional and complex beings with particular social, cultural, and historical life circumstances" (Orbe, p. 6). Research from a co-cultural theoretical perspective is designed to address the inequality and power differential that exists between researchers and co-cultural groups by empowering co-culture members to engage in the research process as co-researchers and including them in the interpretation of the research data (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012). Ultimately, the use of a phenomenological approach within co-cultural theory provides a methodology that allows the voices of marginalized groups to become an integral part of scholarly inquiry (Orbe, 1998c).

Central to co-cultural research are six interrelated factors that influence the manner in which co-cultures communicate and interact with the dominant culture. These influential factors include preferred outcome, field of experience, situational context, abilities, perceived costs and rewards, and communication approach (Orbe, 1998c; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008; Urban & Orbe, 2007). Orbe (1998b) summarizes the interrelation of these concepts in the following statement:

> Situated within a particular *field of experience* that governs their perceptions of the *costs and rewards* associated with, as well as their *ability* to engage in, various communicative practices, co-cultural group members will adopt certain communication orientations—based on their *preferred outcomes* and *communication approaches*—to fit the circumstances of a specific *situation*. (p. 129)

Preferred outcome is one of the primary factors that influence the co-cultural communicative process as "co-cultural group members consciously or unconsciously weigh how their communication interactions influence their relationship with dominant group members" (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010, p. 277). According to co-cultural theory, the

preferred outcome of the interaction causes the co-cultural group member to respond using one of three interactional outcome possibilities: assimilation, accommodation, or separation (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Orbe, 1998b; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Assimilation involves an attempt on the part of co-culture group members to conform to the culture of the dominant group by eliminating to the extent possible their cultural differences and characteristics (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Orbe, 1998c). The use of accommodation by co-cultural groups is considered the most effective communication interaction outcome as they are able to value and maintain their distinct cultural characteristics while applying effective communication skills to coexist with the dominant culture (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Orbe, 1998b). The final communication alternative for co-cultural groups is separation. Separation rejects the idea of establishing a common relationship with dominant groups and at times even other co-cultural groups, instead choosing to develop separate and unique identities that avoid the characteristics of outside groups (Burnett et al., 2009; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Orbe, 1998a). Depending on the context of the situation and the desired result, most co-cultural groups allow for some flexibility in their communication practices within dominant society structures (Orbe, 1998b, 1998c).

The second influential factor in co-cultural research is the co-cultural group members' field of experience. Field of experience involves the lived experiences and communication patterns of co-cultural group members as they have learned and been instructed both directly and indirectly on appropriate and effective communication practices "as a means to achieve a number of outcomes, including social approval, communication effectiveness, and positive social identity" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 11). Closely

associated with the co-cultural group members' field of experience is their situational context. Situational context is central to the co-cultural communication process as it frequently helps co-culture members to calculate preferred communication approaches, helping them to consider several key factors such as communication setting (e.g., school, community, home), the presence of dominant group members, and the presence of other co-cultural group members (Orbe, 1998c; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). An important consideration in co-cultural communication is the member's actual ability to engage in and execute communication practices that bring about the desired outcome (Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008). The ability of co-cultural group members to communicate may vary depending on several factors, such as their personal characteristics, their ability to respond to confrontation, the extent of their co-cultural network, and whether they have dominant group liaisons to assist them (Orbe, 1998b).

Other factors that influence communication interactions are the perceived costs and rewards. With regard to weighing the pros and cons of specific communication practices, Orbe (1998c) states:

> Practices where the anticipated rewards (communication effectiveness, social approval, or increased money or status) are greater than the costs (expended energy or time, anticipated sanctions from inappropriate behaviors, loss of self-respect) are those that are most attractive to co-cultural group members. (p. 13)

The process of determining the rewards and costs must also factor in the co-culture member's unique standpoint, which includes cultural values and practices, social circumstances, the historical setting, field of experience, and the power dynamics that are involved in the situation (Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Orbe, 1998b).

The last influential factor in the co-cultural interaction is the communication approach. Communication approaches can be considered nonassertive, assertive, or

aggressive. A nonassertive approach involves a nonconfrontational communication style wherein the individual is often submissive. An aggressive communication approach involves behaviors that are "more hurtfully expressive, self-promoting, and controlling" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 14). Finally, an assertive approach avoids the extremes of nonassertive and aggressive approaches and attempts to communicate in a manner that considers both the needs of the individual and the other group members involved (Orbe, 1998c; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Rarely does the co-culture member plan these communication approaches in advance; rather, the use of a particular approach greatly depends on the collective interplay of the six communication factors used by co-cultural groups.

Co-cultural theory provides an essential framework for researchers to achieve a greater accuracy in understanding and insight about the lived experiences and perceptions of co-cultural groups that are "often made invisible by traditional research designs that strongly reflect a dominant group perspective" (Orbe, 1998c, p. 20). The increased depth and accuracy of scholarly inquiry is accomplished as researchers recognize the factors that influence co-cultural communication; attend to the power dynamics within dominant societal contexts; and, finally, legitimize the standpoints of the co-cultural group members by encouraging them to share their voices and providing them with opportunities to be actively involved in the research process as co-researchers. The following section addresses the use of co-cultural theory as this study's interpretive theoretical framework in conjunction with the Meleis (1996) cultural competency criteria as this study's analytical framework.

Co-Cultural Theory and the Meleis Framework

The Meleis (1996) framework and co-cultural theory align closely with one another in a number of ways. Both frameworks emphasize the need for researchers to respect and value the unique nature and contributions of the cultural groups they are studying. Each framework acknowledges the existence of a power differential between the cultural group and the researcher. The frameworks promote the active involvement of the cultural group members during the research process in order to ensure that the research efforts accurately reflect the lived experiences and perspectives of the cultural group (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1998c). Additionally, each framework stresses the importance that the research be relevant to and ultimately benefit the cultural group being studied (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1998c). Very similar to the theoretical underpinnings of co-cultural theory, the basic premise of the Meleis (1996) cultural competency framework is to avoid the further marginalization of cultural groups during the research process by acknowledging the lived experiences of the disenfranchised groups and to give voice to their perspectives. Meleis (1996) argues that academic research and scholarship can contribute to the marginalization of vulnerable populations if such scholarship does not demonstrate cultural competency in a manner that is both substantive and rigorous. Additionally, research and scholarship should acknowledge the unique social positioning of marginalized groups and be inclusive of the perspectives, ideas, and voices of marginalized group members as part of the scholarly inquiry (Meleis, 1996). To this point, Meleis (1996) contends that the marginalization of cultural groups ultimately affects the quality and type of care delivered by professionals due to the lack of input by these groups in the development of academic

knowledge and treatment protocols.

The eight cultural competency criteria and the six influential communication factors of co-cultural theory use distinct terminologies to describe the elements involved in cross-cultural research, and yet the similarities between the two frameworks are significant. Co-cultural theory is applied primarily as a theoretical tool for researchers who are observing and analyzing the interactions and communication behaviors of co-cultural groups, while the eight cultural competency criteria are more frequently used by researchers and scholars to evaluate their own use of culturally competent practices with co-cultural groups.

Both frameworks emphasize the importance of acknowledging groups' unique standpoints in society and ensuring that a group's natural voice is heard and portrayed accurately. Co-cultural theory describes a group member's standpoint as that group member's *field of experience* and *situational context,* whereas the concept is described as *contextuality* within the eight cultural competency criteria. Both frameworks refer to the importance of considering the lived experiences and social context of co-cultural groups. Communication is another essential element identified within both frameworks. Whether identified within co-cultural theory as *communication approach* or within the eight criteria as *communication style*, communication is meant to increase researchers' awareness of co-cultural groups' intra- and intergroup communication behaviors and to help researchers accommodate a group's preferred communication style, creating an environment in which group members can comfortably relate their lived experiences and share their perceptions.

Another important concept held by both frameworks is the consideration of the

co-cultural group members' abilities. While co-cultural theory emphasizes the recognition that some co-cultural groups have varying abilities with regard to communicating with other groups, the eight cultural competency criteria focus on empowering group members to use their abilities to contribute to both the research process as well as to improve their social and environmental surroundings.

Drawing from the theoretical underpinnings of muted group theory, the two frameworks recognize the power differential that exists between researchers and co-cultural groups. Researchers must be cognizant of and make efforts to build trust and rapport as a means of reducing the power differential during the research process. As co-cultural groups develop an increased sense of trust and rapport with researchers, an atmosphere is created in which co-cultural groups can communicate and interact in a manner that is comfortable and that allows group members to respond openly and freely. Co-cultural theory recognizes the influential factor of power with the term *preferred outcome.* This concept is addressed as two separate criteria within the eight cultural competency criteria, the first being the *awareness of identity and power* and the second being *disclosure*. An effective way in which researchers can build rapport and trust among co-cultural groups is by taking sufficient *time* to familiarize themselves with the group's cultural aspects as well as to interact directly with group members. Both frameworks recognize that time is essential to reducing the power differential and that each co-cultural group often has a distinct concept of time. Researchers must realize that they may need to adapt their timeframe and research agenda to accommodate the needs and timeframe of the cultural group.

The final concept addressed in both frameworks is the idea of costs and rewards.

Co-cultural theory argues that co-cultural groups continuously assess the *cost and rewards* associated with their interactions with other groups and frequently base their behaviors and decisions on what can either be gained or lost due to the interactions. The concepts of r*elevance* and *reciprocation* within the eight cultural competency criteria are similar to the concept of cost and rewards described in co-cultural theory in that the participants must determine whether the research is seen as pertinent and beneficial to their lives. An important part of culturally competent research within both frameworks is to create a research experience that meets the goals and needs of group members and benefits their community.

Actively considering and implementing the previously mentioned cultural factors provides a comprehensive approach to performing and assessing co-cultural research and scholarship. When applied by researchers and scholars, these frameworks can enhance both the rigor and substance of scholarly inquiry. Based on the purpose of this study—which was to examine the application of cultural competency practices by social work researchers with the Latino population—co-cultural theory and the Meleis (1996) cultural competency research framework best aligned with the purposes of the research and served as the overarching frameworks used during the analysis. Meleis's (1996) framework with its eight cultural competency criteria served as the analytical framework due to its well-conceptualized design as an evaluative tool to assess the nature and degree of culturally competent practices used by researchers and scholars. Co-cultural theory and its theoretical underpinnings provided insight and understanding into the interactions that occurred during the research process between Latinos and social work researchers. In the end, the theoretical concepts and purposes of the two frameworks were effective for

assessing the cultural competency practices being applied by social work researchers.

Summary

This chapter contains the discussion of the theoretical and analytical frameworks used for this study. Meleis's (1996) framework with eight cultural competency criteria served as an analytical framework for assessing the cultural competency practices of social work researchers and scholars. The eight cultural competency criteria formed the basis of the research design and methodology. Co-cultural theory served as the interpretive theoretical framework by which researchers were able to obtain greater insight and understanding regarding the interactions between marginalized cultural groups and researchers during the research process. The following chapter describes the research design, methodology, and data analysis portions of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter describes the methods that were used in the study. The chapter is organized into 7 sections: (1) content analysis, (2) research questions, (3) measurement, (4) study design, (5) content analysis process, (6) researcher positionality, and (7) ethical considerations. The chapter ends with a summary.

Content Analysis

A content analysis of social work journal articles was the method used to evaluate whether and to what degree social work researchers were following culturally competent research practices when studying Latino populations in the United States. Scholars and researchers across many academic disciplines, including communications, nursing, mental health, political science, business, and sociology, have frequently used content analysis to analyze patterns, themes, or trends that occur within a variety of contexts (e.g., professions, media, cultures, societies) (Broughton & Molasso, 2006; Jacobson et al., 2005; Krippendorff, 2004; Marshall et al., 2011; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis is an established and rigorous research technique used to identify and measure information, themes, or patterns within the content of a specified unit of analysis (e.g., newspapers, textbooks, photos, journal articles) through a systematic method of evaluation based on an objective set of replicable and peer-

reviewed criteria (Broughton & Molasso, 2006; Jacobson et al., 2005; Krippendorff, 2004; Marshall et al., 2011; McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis allows both quantitative and qualitative methods to be used in the examination of text (Broughton & Molasso, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992; Mokuau et al., 2008). According to Mendias and Guevara (2001):

> The use of objective criteria to evaluate culturally competent scholarship promotes the critical and substantive evaluation necessary to develop self-awareness of bias and unintended consequences of theories we use. Objective criteria also assist in maintaining researcher vigilance against the assumption of a position of authority, conviction, or belief that overlooks the community's voice, context, culture, and personal beliefs. (p. 257)

Given that this study focused on analyzing scholarly articles found in social work journals, it is relevant to note the academic importance of performing content analysis on professional journals. Marshall et al. (2011) state:

> Content analysis is a particularly useful method for examining how professional journals shape the dialogue, content, theories, methods, and intentions of professional intervention. Professional journals have a powerful effect on professions; they have been described as "footprints" by which the development of knowledge in a profession can be traced. Journals help to establish the issues that are addressed by professions, and they provide current information on research, theory, and practice. (p. 204)

Findings obtained through content analysis provide an effective way to derive meaning from and draw important inferences from a large amount of information that can then be used to advance the knowledge base of a profession, influence future research efforts, shape theory, and improve practice (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis can also be an effective means to bring about change in public policy and other systemic practices, as the analysis helps to identify practices that may perpetuate injustice or inequality (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Each of these objectives

is important to the development and advancement of the social work profession.

Content analysis has been used by many social work researchers to explore numerous subjects, such as racism within social work journals, social work practice with Pacific Islanders, social work with the aging population, and end-of-life content in textbooks (Kramer, Pacourek & Hovland-Scafe, 2003; Marshall et al., 2011; McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992; Mokuau et al., 2008; Tompkins, Larkin & Rosen, 2006). Much can be learned about a profession and its relationship with a particular client population by the literature it publishes (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992; Meyer, 1983). The aim of the content analysis performed in this study was to analyze social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States in order to provide insight into the application of cultural competency standards and practices by social work researchers when studying Latinos.

The following sections address the components of the content analysis that were used to analyze the cultural competency practices of social work researchers. The first essential component of the content analysis process used in this study was the development of research questions that were specific and measurable (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Schreier, 2012). The specificity of the research questions was critical in order to design the various components of the content analysis process that were used to address each of the research questions. This study answered four specific research questions in order to analyze the degree to which and the manner in which social work researchers applied cultural competency concepts and practices in social work journal articles.

Research Questions

1. What was the frequency with which the eight cultural competency criteria were applied in social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States?
2. What was the frequency with which the cultural competency subcriteria were applied in social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States?
3. How did the utilization of the cultural competency criteria change between 1990 and 2012 in social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States?
4. How did social work researchers and scholars describe the use of the cultural competency criteria in social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States?

Measurement

According to Neuendorf (2002), "the most distinctive characteristic that differentiates content analysis from other, more qualitative or interpretive message analyses is the attempt to meet the standards of the scientific method" (p. 10). Content analysis can include both quantitative and qualitative analysis of textual messages, and, as a research method, it is designed to attend to such research criteria as objectivity–intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, and hypothesis testing (Neuendorf, 2002). Given that most forms of content analysis are examinations of text rather than human subjects, the terminology used to describe its measurement components does differ somewhat from the vocabulary used in social science research

with human participants. For example, in content analysis, the unit of analysis is the particular object being studied. A unit of analysis can vary dramatically depending on the purpose of the study and can range from newspapers and textbooks to photos and journal articles (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002).

For this study, the unit of analysis was the written text of social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States. Within the unit of analysis were units of observation, which served as the targets of the analysis and became the data that were measured and analyzed in order to address the research questions outlined in this study. The units of observations were expressed within texts using as few as several words or as much as an entire paragraphs. The units of observation for this study were measured by comparing each textual observation found within the articles against the coding definitions developed for each of the eight cultural competency criteria and subcriteria and then assigning the observation to the appropriate criterion. The criteria measurements were designed to be mutually exclusive so that each textual observation was recorded and counted only as part of the analysis once. The categorized observations were recorded both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data were based on the number of criteria that were found within a particular article, and the qualitative data were based on the textual descriptions of the criteria within the article.

This study measured the occurrence of the eight cultural competency criteria within an article as a cumulative total as well as by individual criterion in order to understand the total and individual amounts of the cultural competency areas addressed by social work researchers when examining Latino populations. The eight cultural competency criteria were measured by subcriteria corresponding to each of the eight

cultural competency criteria. The subcriteria were measured and analyzed individually as a means of understanding the specific cultural competency methods that social work researchers used when examining Latino populations. The following section includes a description of the eight criteria and subcriteria measures that were used to examine the text of the articles included in the study.

Eight Criteria and Subcriteria Measures

This section describes each of the eight criteria and the subcriteria measures used to analyze the text of the articles included in the study. A detailed description of the coding-scheme definitions for each of the measures as well as the coding process used by the reviewers during the study's analysis is found in the study's codebook in Appendix A. The eight-criteria coding scheme was developed in part by referring to the criteria descriptions identified in Meleis (1996) and Jacobson et al. (2005). This researcher found the descriptions of the eight cultural competency criteria used by Jacobson et al. (2005) to be overly broad, which resulted in research outcomes and recommendations that lacked specificity. In an effort to increase the specificity of a content analysis based on the concepts of the eight cultural competency criteria, this researcher developed several subcriteria for each of the eight criteria.

The coding scheme for the subcriteria was developed by examining the original definitions, concepts, and examples found in Meleis (1996). This researcher found that the criteria descriptions focused on three distinct areas: (1) participant, (2) community, and (3) researcher. The three areas formed the basis for the majority of the subcriteria coding scheme definitions. For example, the criterion of reciprocation was divided into three subcriteria that examined the study benefits received by the participants, the

community, and the researcher. There were also several subcriteria with concepts directed at the examination of a particular research practice rather than of a person or group. For example, a subcategory within the criteria of communication was developed to analyze the types of culturally sensitive research materials used in the article.

Having subcriteria for each of the eight criteria allowed for a more detailed analysis of the culturally competent practices found within the articles, which ultimately allowed for specific recommendations to be made based on the outcomes. The following descriptions of the eight criteria are not listed in any particular order of significance, as they each have a unique and integral role in culturally competent research practice. In addition to the descriptions of the eight criteria, the subcriteria for each of the eight criteria is listed and described.

Contextuality

The first criterion of the coding scheme was *contextuality*. For this criterion, the research accounted for the participants' lifestyles and environmental circumstances, which included economic, cultural, social, and historical context. Contextuality was measured by accounting for the following research practices or processes: (1) The researcher presented a contextual framework based on the direct participants' perceptions or descriptions of their economic, cultural, social, or historical context. The researcher gathered the direct participants' context through interviews, meetings, or focus groups. (2) The researcher presented a contextual framework based on the indirect participants' (community leaders' or local community members') perceptions or descriptions of their economic, cultural, social, and historical context. The researcher gathered indirect participants' contexts through interviews, meetings, or focus groups. (3) The researcher

referenced community-specific information about the participants, such as local demographic information, and written or published communications such as community needs assessments, research literature, or local journalism in order to establish the economic, cultural, social, and historical context of the participants. (4) The researcher referred to general or generic information about Latino populations in order to establish the context for the study or paper.

Relevance

Relevance was the second criterion within the coding scheme. Relevance accounted for the meaningful and beneficial nature of the study in bringing about improvements to participants' welfare and in enhancing social work practice with Latino populations in the United States. Relevance was measured by accounting for the following research practices or processes: (1) direct participants helped identify issues relevant to their needs or those of community, (2) indirect participants such as community leaders or members helped identify issues relevant to the community, (3) local social workers helped identify issues relevant to the community, and (4) the researcher identified the topic(s) believed to be relevant to the Latino population(s) being studied.

Communication

Communication was the third criterion within the coding scheme. Communication accounted for the use of the most effective or preferred forms of communication based on participant input or through research on specific communication methods used with the specific community being studied. Communication styles were measured using the

following research practices or processes: (1) participants were provided language accommodations (e.g., verbal, written, cultural); (2) research materials (e.g., forms, handouts, surveys) accommodated the population's linguistic, cultural, or communication needs; and (3) the researcher (including the research team) possessed or demonstrated cross-cultural communication abilities (e.g., bilingual abilities, region/country specific communication skills). In certain situations, community members assisted with the communication needs of the study participants and were considered as part of the research team.

Identity and Power

Identity and power was the fourth criterion within the coding scheme. For this criterion, the research accounted for researchers' efforts to reduce the power differential that exists between academic researchers and participants by involving direct and indirect participants in the research process. This criterion also accounted for researchers' positionality, which included the identification of their own biases and the potential influence these biases may have had upon the research. This criterion was measured using the following research practices or processes: (1) direct participants were involved in at least one aspect of the research process beyond being a study subject, (2) indirect participants were involved in at least one aspect of the research process, and (3) the researcher acknowledged his/her biases or personal influence.

Disclosure

Disclosure was the fifth criterion within the coding scheme. This criterion accounted for issues related to privacy and secrecy as well as efforts to build trust among

participants and the community. Disclosure was measured using the following research practices or processes: (1) the researcher identified participants' concerns about privacy, secrecy, or trust regarding the research; (2) informed consent was obtained, or the institutional review board (IRB) documents were reviewed with participants; and (3) the researcher built trust with participants to help them feel more comfortable participating in the study.

Reciprocation

Reciprocation was the sixth criterion in the coding scheme. Reciprocation accounted for efforts made on the part of researchers to ensure that research stakeholders benefited from or were compensated for their research participation or efforts. Reciprocation was measured using the following research practices or processes: (1) the participants received some tangible benefit or compensation, (2) community leaders or organizations received some tangible form of compensation or benefit that helped the community, and (3) the researcher identified the benefits of the study as it pertained to the social work profession.

Empowerment

Empowerment was the seventh criterion in the coding scheme. Empowerment accounted for the study's ability to provide additional knowledge, skills, or abilities to improve or enhance the participants' welfare or that of the community. Empowerment was measured using the following research practices or processes: (1) participants gained knowledge or skills to enhance their lives or their community's welfare, (2) indirect participants gained knowledge or skills to enhance the welfare of their communities, and

(3) the researcher acknowledged how the research process could have been improved or adapted to better account for the participants' culture.

Time

Time was the eighth and final criterion of the coding scheme. Time accounted for the participants' perceptions and use of time as well as the researcher's efforts to make adaptations during the research process to accommodate the participants' use of time. This criterion also accounted for the impact that time had upon the research process in general. Time was measured using the following research practices or processes: (1) the researcher accounted for the research's impact on participants' time or lifestyle; (2) the researcher adapted the research process to accommodate the participants' time or lifestyle; and (3) the researcher discussed how time had affected the research process in general, including time's possible impact on the study's outcomes.

In addition to the eight criteria and the subcriteria measures, several secondary variables measures were developed in order to provide context to the journals that were included in the study. The following section describes the secondary variable measures.

Secondary Variable Measures

In addition to measuring the occurrence of the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria, this study also measured several secondary variables to account for additional factors that may correspond with the use of the cultural competency criteria with Latino populations in the United States. The secondary variables in this study were (1) article classification, (2) research methodology, (3) participants' nationalities, (4) participants' citizenship status, (5) participants' generational status, (6) social work

practice emphasis, (7) social work area, and (8) author's discipline.

Article classification was included in the study as a secondary variable to observe whether cultural competency practices vary according to article type and methodology. During the coding process, this study applied the following article classification used by Jacobson et al. (2005): (1) *descriptive*, which included quantitative exploratory, correlational, or comparative studies; qualitative studies; and interviews; (b) *intervention*, which included experimental studies that manipulated independent variables; (c) *methodological*, which focused on areas such as instrument evaluation and studies comparing methodological strategies; (d) *experiential*, which included fieldwork or narrative experiences related to personal or procedural experiences; (e) *literature reviews;* and (f) *secondary data analysis.*

Research methodology as a secondary variable allowed for an analysis as to whether the use of the cultural competency criteria varied by the type of methodology used with the population. There were four categories used for this variable: (1) quantitative research, (2) qualitative research, (3) mixed methods research, and (4) other methods of scholarly inquiry.

The participants' nationality as a secondary variable allowed for an analysis of differences in cultural competency practices based upon nationality. The following participant nationality categories were adapted from the work of Gutiérrez et al. (2000) and were based on the frequency of Latino nationalities reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011): (1) Mexican American, (2) Mexican, (3) Puerto Rican, (4) Cuban, (5) Dominican, (6) Central American, (7) South American, (8) multiple groups, and (9) unspecified/unable to determine.

The participants' citizenship status and generational status were both included as secondary variables in order to help determine the use of cultural competency practices based on citizenship and generation. The categories that composed each of the variables were based on the definitions and categorizations of the U.S. Census Bureau (Ennis et al., 2011). The generational categories included: (1) first-generation Latino immigrants, which refers to those who were foreign born; (2) second-generation Latinos, which includes those born in the United States who have at least one foreign-born parent; (3) third-generation or more Latinos, which includes those with two U.S.-born parents; and (4) unspecified/unable to determine. The citizenship categories included (1) U.S. citizen, (2) U.S. legal permanent resident, (3) undocumented immigrant, and (4) unspecified/ unable to determine.

Social work practice emphasis was also included as a secondary variable in order to address whether cultural competency practices were influenced by whether the article emphasized direct or indirect practice. The social work practice emphasis categories included: (1) direct practice included case managers and mental health therapists; (2) indirect practice included administrators, policy makers, community organizers, educators, and researchers; and (3) both direct and indirect practice. The direct and indirect practice descriptions for these categories were adapted from the social work practice descriptions by Inglehart and Becerra (2011) and Devore and Schlesinger (1991).

Social work area was coded as a secondary variable to determine if cultural competency practices varied according to the following CSWE (2011) social work area concentrations: (1) mental health, (2) health, (3) corrections/criminal justice, (4) child welfare, (5) aging/gerontology, (6) addictions/substance abuse, (7) other.

Professionals in related social science and counseling fields can author articles in journals of social work; therefore, this study coded the first authors' discipline as a secondary variable that may have influenced the use of cultural competency practices. The following are the educational discipline categories that were coded in this study: (1) social work, (2) psychology, (3) sociology, (4) anthropology, (5) family and consumer studies, (6) educational psychology, and (7) other.

The following section discusses the study design and includes a description of the social work journals and journal articles used in the study, the limits of the journal article sample, as well as a description of the systematic process used to generate the sample.

Study Design

The content analysis approach used in this study involved the systematic examination of peer-reviewed social work journal articles that addressed social work practice with Latinos in the United States from 1990 to 2012. Selecting journals specific to the social work profession allowed for a targeted analysis of social work research and scholarship practices that have the potential to guide and influence social work education and practice. In order to perform the content analysis on social work journal articles, it was first necessary to define the sample of social work journals from which the journal articles would be gathered. For this study's research sample, social work journal articles were selected based upon the study's focus on the cultural competency of social work research practices applied with Latino populations in the United States as well as upon the study's emphasis on the context of the ethical and profession standards of social worker research within the United States.

The journal sample for this current study was drawn from the research of Hodges

and Lacasse (2011), in which they evaluated social work journal quality based on correlations among journal citation factors, namely the journal's impact factor and the journal's H-index value. A journal's impact factor is calculated by averaging the number of times over a two-year period that articles from a professional journal have been cited within the current collection of journals included in the Journal Citation Reports by Thomson Reuters (Hodges & Lacasse, 2011). A journal's H-index value is found by calculating how many of a journal's articles have been cited an equal number of times. For example "an H-index of 10 would indicate 10 articles that had each been cited at least 10 times" (Hodges & Lacasse, 2011, p. 224). According to Hodges and Lacasse, (2011), there are several benefits of using the H-index value. First, the H-index is not limited by a specific time frame. Second, the H-index is not based on the mean of a journal's citations, which can be easily skewed by a small number of frequently cited articles. Finally, the H-index is obtained using citation data gathered from Google Scholar, which has a broader network of data collection on social science literature than the Journal Citation Reports (Hodges & Lacasse, 2011).

Hodges and Lacasse (2011) and Sellers, Perry, Mathiesen, and Smith (2004, 2006) assert that journal quality influences decisions made by academicians with regard to manuscript publication and academic course content and also influences journal readership and the practice behaviors of field practitioners. Hodges and Lacasse (2011) found strong correlations between a journal's impact factor and its H-index as well as correlations with previous studies by Sellers et al. (2004, 2006), which evaluated social workers' perceptions of journal prestige. The Hodges and Lacasse (2011) study resulted in a list of the highest ranked U.S. disciplinary social work journals according to journal

citation index factors and journal prestige ratings. Table 1 displays the list of the highest ranked American disciplinary social work journals adapted from Hodges and Lacasse (2011).

This list of American disciplinary social work journals was selected as the representative sample for the current study based on the journals' alignment with the scope and purpose of this study. Additionally, this journal sample provided an effective method for obtaining social work journal articles that aligned with the purpose of study, which was to examine social work research and scholarship regarding Latino populations in the United States.

The sample of social work journals was then systematically reviewed for articles based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. Journal articles were included in the study based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) the journal article examined Latino populations in the United States, including U.S. citizens, U.S. legal residents, and noncitizens, and (2) the journal article appeared between 1990 and 2012.

The first inclusion criterion was based on the study's focus on examining culturally competent research practices with the numerous Latino groups found within the United States. The articles were limited to those pertaining to Latino populations residing in the United States and not those in which researchers performed studies with Latinos outside of the United States. This maintained a homogeneous sample given the possibility that researchers performing research in foreign countries may have applied cultural competency practices to a different degree due based on an increased awareness of the cultural environment and cultural norms of that population. Journal articles were obtained by searching the previously mentioned social work journals using systematic

Table 1: American Disciplinary Social Work Journals

Journal	*H-Index*	*Prestige**
Social Work	23	4.73
Research on Social Work Practice	21	3.86
Social Service Review	18	5.12
Health & Social Work	18	3.29
Social Work Research	16	4.20
Journal of Social Work Education	16	4.19
Families in Society	16	3.99
Administration in Social Work	13	2.75
Social Work in Health Care	13	2.53
Affilia	10	3.19
Journal of Social Service Research	9	3.98
Clinical Social Work Journal	8	2.47
Smith College Studies in Social Work	6	2.46

*Faculty perceptions as reported by Sellers et al. (2004).

search terms such as Latino(s), Hispanic(s), Mexican(s), Puerto Rican(s), Cuban(s), as well as the specific search terms related to each of the other Latino nationalities. Additional search terms included immigrant(s), undocumented, unauthorized, illegal immigrant(s), and permanent resident(s).

The second inclusion criterion required that the journal article be published between the years 1990 and 2012. The rationale for choosing this particular time frame was to allow for a broad historical perspective on the current topic. Twenty-three years was assumed sufficient for detecting meaningful patterns from the data. Establishing the year 1990 as the lower limit allowed for an analysis of historical trends and changes in culturally competent practices among social work scholars. This time frame will have provided the necessary duration for social work researchers to have become familiar with and incorporated cultural competency concepts, methodologies, and techniques into their research. Specifically, this time frame would have allowed a sufficient amount of time for social work researchers to incorporate culturally competent practices as part of their research based on the ethical mandate for cultural competency adopted by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly. The ethical mandate introduced a new policy section in the two principal publications of NASW: *Social Work Speaks: NASW Policy Statements* and the NASW *Code of Ethics*. In both publications, the newly adopted section entitled "Cultural Competence in the Social Work Profession" provided social workers with a written statement making culturally competent practice a professional standard as well as an ethical responsibility (NASW, 2001). Additionally, the inclusionary time frame would have allowed a sufficient amount of time for researchers to be exposed to the cultural competency research framework developed by Meleis (1996).

Journal articles were excluded from the study sample based on the following exclusion criteria: (1) the article included multiple races or ethnic groups; (2) the article was an editorial piece, an opinion paper, or a book review; and (3) the article was written in a language other than English or Spanish. The first exclusion criterion allowed the current study to focus its analysis on culturally competent research practices that have been applied exclusively with the Latino population. The second exclusion criterion allowed the study to focus its analysis on research and scholarship articles. The final exclusion criterion was based on the fact that the reviewers in this study were limited to examining texts written in either English or Spanish.

The results of the systematic review found that from 1990 to 2012, a total of 124 articles that examined Latino populations in the United States were found within the 13 American disciplinary social work journals selected for this study. This represents 1.4% of 9,036 articles published in these social work journals. The inclusionary search terms proved to be exhaustive during the systematic review of social work journal articles. The systematic review did not reveal any documents written in Spanish. Once the journal articles to be used in the study were gathered, the analysis of those articles required the development of the remaining content analysis process components. The following section addresses the content analysis components that were developed and implemented for this study in order to examine the text of each journal article.

Content Analysis Process

The components of the content analysis process included the development of the study codebook, coding scheme, coding forms, reviewer training, coding process, and data analysis. One of the primary components of the content analysis process was the

development and use of the study codebook. The following sections address each of the components in the content analysis process, beginning with the study codebook.

Study Codebook

The study's codebook is an essential part of the content analysis process. It serves as a comprehensive guide or manual and contains a detailed description of the content analysis method, design, variables, and processes used during the study. More importantly, the codebook serves as a guide that independent reviewers can use to replicate the study without the original researcher being present (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). The development of a study's codebook is commonly a joint effort among the reviewers involved in the study (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). For the current study, three reviewers assisted with the content analysis process. The reviewers included the researcher and two social work graduate students. The three reviewers, including the researcher, had no prior experience performing research using content analysis as a research methodology. The lack of content analysis experience provided for increased collaboration among the reviewers in the development of the various coding process components such as the study codebook and coding forms. The initial framework for content analysis methods, description of the criteria variables, coding scheme, and coding forms were initially developed by the primary researcher and then further revised and adapted in collaboration with the two additional reviewers.

Generally, a study codebook comprises several components. The codebook used in this study included specific descriptions of each study variable in order to provide reviewers with the necessary details to accurately identify the variables within an article's text. The entire codebook for this study can be found in Appendix A. The codebook used

in this study used numeric identifiers assigned to each variable for coding purposes. The numeric identifiers were used to record the data on coding forms. The numeric identifiers were used solely for data collection and coding purposes, and they did not indicate a variable's particular value or significance. A detailed discussion of the coding scheme and coding forms used in this study is given in the subsequent sections.

The codebook used in this study also contained the exact protocol that the reviewers followed to perform the content analysis in a systematic manner. The protocol provided the specific steps regarding the identification of the study's variables, properly coding the variables, and recording the data on the study's coding form. The coding protocol is addressed in a subsequent section within this chapter. The codebook also contained a record of revisions made to the coding scheme and coding process during the initial stages of the study as well as the feedback and observations provided by the reviewers at the completion of the study. The following section addresses the development and content of the coding scheme.

Coding Scheme

A coding scheme comprises detailed descriptions of the categories that are used to measure a study's variables and contains the operationalized definitions for each categorical variable that serves as a measure by which textual data can be accurately identified and categorized (Neuendorf, 2002). The eight cultural competency criteria descriptions developed by Meleis (1996) served as the conceptual framework from which the coding scheme was developed and operationalized for this study. The concepts from the original descriptions of the eight cultural competency criteria were adapted for social work practice and were then operationalized by this researcher into subcriteria in order to

identify and measure specific research practices or processes that were used by the authors of the social work articles selected for the study.

Coding Scheme Development Process

The initial framework for the coding scheme was developed by the researcher based on the descriptions of the eight cultural competency criteria. The coding scheme for the eight criteria and their subcriteria was then further developed, clarified, and revised with the assistance of the two additional reviewers. Revisions to the coding scheme were based on the feedback that the reviewers received during the training process as they analyzed sample journal articles for evidence of the cultural competency criteria. As reviewers found evidence of the criteria within the article, they categorized their observations according to the criteria descriptions. Reviewers frequently discussed the criteria coding descriptions to ensure that they aligned with the principles and intent of the eight criteria. In cases in where the coding of a particular observation was unclear or there was uncertainty on the part of the reviewer, the group of reviewers worked together to clarify the coding description and did so until a unanimous consensus was reached as to the changes that needed to be made to clarify the coding scheme definition. This coding scheme development process continued until all coding concerns or uncertainties were addressed. In addition to the coding scheme for the cultural competency criteria, the same coding scheme development process was used for several secondary variables that were measured in the study.

The following section describes the coding forms that were used throughout the content analysis of the social work journal articles in order to gather data based on the coding scheme described in this section.

Coding Forms

An important component of the content analysis process was the development of the study's coding forms. See Appendices B and C for a detailed example of the study's coding forms. The framework for the coding forms for this study was initially developed by the primary researcher and was revised and adapted by the additional reviewers. The designs of the coding forms were based on the coding scheme variable descriptions. Two coding forms were created to facilitate the documentation of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative coding form used during the content analysis process was created electronically as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to allow reviewers the ability to record and save the quantitative data. The Excel coding form served as a visual template made up of columns and rows that were labeled according to the variables included in the coding scheme. The quantitative coding form included columns and rows to record the specific occurrences of the eight cultural competency criteria and the corresponding subcriteria measures. The quantitative coding form also included columns and rows to record data that corresponded to each of the secondary variables.

The quantitative coding form was designed in a manner that provided the reviewers with a systematic method for documenting the occurrence of the study's variables during the content analysis process. As the reviewers examined the text of an article and identified the occurrence of a particular variable within the text, they recorded their observations on the quantitative coding form by documenting the occurrence according to the column and row that corresponded with the variable. In some cases, numeric identifiers were used in place of the variable names to improve documentation efficiency and to facilitate the transfer of quantitative data into statistical analysis

programs. The specific numeric identifiers are included in the study's codebook. The quantitative coding form also allowed additional space for reviewers to type questions or make comments that could be used to provide feedback about the process or address concerns.

The reviewers were also permitted to use a hard copy of the quantitative coding form for convenience in the instance that a computer was not immediately available to record the data. If a reviewer chose to use a hard copy of the quantitative coding form, the reviewer was expected to transfer the data to an electronic version of the quantitative coding form as soon as possible. The reviewers found that they used a combination of both hard copy and electronic versions of the quantitative coding form based on the availability of a computer. Ultimately, all quantitative coding forms and the data were electronically documented.

The qualitative coding form was created electronically in Microsoft Word. The qualitative coding form allowed the reviewers to document the qualitative descriptions of the study's variables as they reviewed journal articles. When reviewers found evidence of a study variable within the text of an article, they copied and pasted the textual description of the variable into the qualitative coding form according to the corresponding cultural competency criteria and subcriteria. If a reviewer was working with hard copies of the qualitative coding form and an article during the review process, the reviewer was asked to highlight or mark the textual evidence found in the article and record the information on the coding form. The reviewers were expected to transfer the qualitative data from any hard copies to the electronic qualitative coding form as soon as possible. Reviewers found that they used a combination of hard copies and electronic

versions of the qualitative coding form, depending on the availability of a computer. All hard copies of qualitative coding forms were eventually transferred to an electronic coding form.

Both the quantitative coding form and the qualitative coding form allowed for the efficient transfer of quantitative and qualitative data into the data analysis programs that were used in this study: SPSS for the quantitative data and NVivo 10 for the qualitative data. The researcher transferred the data into the data-analysis software programs. The additional research reviewers independently verified the transfer by reviewing their coding forms to confirm that data were recorded correctly. All the coding forms and data were saved on the researcher's computer for recalling quantitative and qualitative data.

Reviewer Training

After developing the study codebook and coding forms, the next phase in the content analysis process was to provide content analysis training to the study's reviewers. Reviewer training was an essential part of the research process as it served to instruct the reviewers on the concepts and practices of content analysis and to clarify and refine the study codebook, coding scheme, and coding process. The goal of the training was to provide a sufficient amount of instruction and practice as a means of preparing the reviewers for the study phase of the research.

In order to move from the training phase to the study phase, the reviewers needed to achieve an inter-rater agreement level of 90% or greater on a sample of training articles. Inter-rater agreement refers to "the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object" (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000, p. 98). As it relates to this study, inter-rater agreement referred to the percentage of agreement

between two independent reviewers when evaluating social work journal articles for evidence of the cultural competency criteria. Inter-rater agreement is a nominal level coefficient metric that is most commonly used to establish the reliability of content analyses that involve nominal variables (Freelon, 2013; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). For this study, using inter-rater agreement was appropriate given that the coding scheme used a dichotomous variable in which reviewers evaluated whether or not a variable was present within a journal article. "Mathematically, [percentage agreement] treats all differences in evaluations equally: the coefficient is not given any additional 'credit' for disagreements between any particular pair(s) of answers" (Freelon, 2013, p. 11). Other metrics for establishing reliability include the use of reliability coefficients such as Cohen's kappa, Scott's pi, and Krippendorff's alpha (Freelon, 2013; Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). Reliability coefficients such as those mentioned are designed for use in calculating inter-rater reliability in cases where the data measurement is ordinal, interval, or ratio, because "the proximity between the assigned values is meaningful" (Freelon, 2013, p. 11). A review of the literature shows that there are no set standards for what is considered an acceptable level of reliability; however, many researchers have concluded that coefficients that are 0.90 or greater are considered excellent and widely acceptable in nearly all situations, and those above 0.80 are commonly accepted in most instances (Lombard et al., 2002; Neuendorf, 2002). The reliability rate for this study was set at .90, or 90% inter-rater agreement.

Achieving 90% or greater inter-rater agreement during the training phase allowed the study to proceed with a sufficient amount of confidence that the inter-rater agreement during the study phase would subsequently maintain or exceed the reliability of the

training phase. The training phase was also designed to address the study's validity and accuracy by providing sufficient time for the reviewers to clarify and refine the study codebook and coding scheme as a means of ensuring that the reviewers were properly identifying all of the study variables within a given article according to the coding definitions within the codebook. The validity and accuracy were also measured by the inter-rater agreement regarding the amount and types of textual evidence found within an article.

The initial framework and outlines for the content analysis training sessions were prepared and developed by this researcher and were adapted based on the instructional needs and training of the reviewers. The training sessions were held on the campus of a local university and were performed with all reviewers present in person at the meeting. Reviewer training included three in-person sessions, with each session being approximately three hours in length. An assessment phase was included at the end of the third training to serve as a means of determining whether the reviewers achieved the sufficient level of inter-rater agreement in order to proceed to the study phase of the research project. Due to geographical distance, there were multiple instances in which additional instruction and training occurred through email and phone conversations to address questions or concerns raised among the reviewers. In each instance, the information on the particular topic was relayed to each reviewer, and the issues were discussed among the reviewers until the matter was addressed and agreed upon by all reviewers. The researcher ensured that the information was understood and that any issues had been fully resolved by sending a follow-up email as a confirmation.

The objectives of the initial reviewer training were to familiarize each of the

reviewers with the various components of the content analysis process (i.e., study codebook, coding scheme, coding forms, and coding protocol) and to provide a sufficient amount of content analysis preparation in order to achieve the inter-rater agreement rate designated for this study. The initial reviewer training session outlined the foundational elements of the study, which included discussing the purpose of the study, the concept and use of content analysis as a research methodology, the study codebook, coding scheme, coding forms, and coding protocol. The majority of the training focused on a detailed discussion of the coding scheme criteria definitions and examples. After the coding scheme was discussed, a sample article similar to those that would be used in the actual study, as well as the study codebook containing the coding scheme, were distributed to each of the reviewers. As a group, the reviewers began reviewing the sample article based on the coding protocol outlined in the study codebook. Upon identifying a coding variable in the article, each group member acknowledged the location of the textual evidence within the article, and a discussion took place among the reviewers about whether the variable sufficiently met the coding scheme as described in the codebook. This process allowed the codebook and coding scheme to be clarified and adapted by group consensus.

Each of the initial topics in the training outline was discussed in detail with the reviewers, and ample time and flexibility was provided in the training structure in order to explain, instruct, and provide answers to the reviewers' questions and concerns about the study and the content analysis process. Questions regarding the content analysis process centered primarily on understanding each of the categories and subcategories in the coding scheme. Understanding of the coding categories was addressed by carefully

defining each of the categories and by providing examples of each category from sample journal articles. Additional questions raised by the reviewers involved wanting to know the approximate number of articles to be reviewed by each individual, the approximate amount of time it takes to review each article, as well as the overall timeline for the research project. The answers to those questions included an initial estimate of 84 articles per individual, and the amount of time to review each article would depend on the length and type of article as well as the familiarity of the coding scheme as the reviewer became more experienced in performing the article analysis. The study timeline was initially presented as being tentatively completed in approximately seven months, with five months estimated as the time needed to review all of the study articles and two months needed to perform the data analysis.

The initial concerns of the reviewers primarily centered on the possibility of conflicting life events such as vacations and family demands that may interfere with the anticipated study timeline, as well as on the more pressing issue, which was the academic demands required of the reviewers; both were in their final semester of their social work graduate program. These concerns were addressed by offering a greater amount of flexibility in the amount of analysis performed during the final months of their academic studies and during times of personal or familial need or vacation. Ultimately, the analysis portion of the study was completed in approximately six months and the data analysis in approximately three months.

The initial training session included an analysis of several articles performed together so that the reviewers could become familiar with the use of the study codebook, the coding scheme, and the coding process. The group read the articles and highlighted

textual evidence that met the coding criteria definitions. The reviewers discussed possible patterns in the texts regarding particular common coding criteria. For example, the reviewers noted that the context and relevance of a study was primarily found within the first several pages of the article, which frequently included the introduction, literature review, and purpose of the study. The remaining criteria were typically widely dispersed throughout the remaining sections of the article.

The initial training session concluded by the researcher providing five sample articles to each of the reviewers to perform an independent analysis in preparation for the subsequent training session. The five sample articles were not included as part of the study results; however, the sample articles did meet the same inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to provide the reviews with an accurate representation of the articles they would be reviewing in the actual study. The training expectation was that each reviewer would come prepared to the following training session having completed the article analyses and having compiled notes regarding their experiences during the analyses. The notes were to include any questions or concerns about the review process as well as ideas regarding possible solutions or suggestions for addressing any challenges encountered during analysis.

The subsequent training session was held two weeks later with all reviewers present. The group discussed the coding process and the outcomes of each of the five sample articles from the previous training session. The discussion centered on identifying the areas in which the reviewers reached agreement on the coding criteria and more particularly on identifying the areas in which there were disagreements or coding inaccuracies. The group discussed the possible reasons for the coding disagreements and

inaccuracies with the intent to clarify the definitions and examples within the coding scheme in order to improve the rate of agreement among the reviews. Clarification and adjustments made to the coding scheme were accomplished through group consensus among the reviewers.

The consensus process involved a discussion as to whether the textual evidence met the exact coding definition as identified in the study codebook. After reviewing the coding scheme definitions, the group members discussed whether the textual evidence should be discarded based on the exact coding definition or whether the evidence accurately represented the concepts and intent of the criteria category and therefore the coding definition was instead in need of further clarification. If the group determined that the textual evidence sufficiently aligned with the criteria category, then clarifications were made to the coding definition to ensure greater accuracy in future analysis. For example, there was an initial question as to whether the mention of IRB approval within an article was indicative that the researcher also reviewed the IRB consent with participants or whether the article must contain a specific statement that IRB documents or consent were discussed with or obtained from the participants. The group decided that the concept behind the category on disclosure was to assess whether the IRB consent was actually discussed with or obtained from the actual participants and that it should not be assumed that IRB approval was synonymous with obtaining consent from the participants. As a result, the coding scheme definition was changed in the codebook to reflect the group's determination.

An additional example of further clarification occurred as the reviewers found the definition of researcher empowerment to be somewhat unclear. They requested further

clarification regarding the concept of empowerment on the part of a researcher/author and also requested a clearer coding definition. The discussion resulted in a group agreement to clarify the coding definition of researcher empowerment to state that the researcher identified ways in which the current research process or research methods could have better accounted for the cultural factors of the study's participants. In this way, the reviewers agreed that the researcher was being empowered by reflecting upon the current research process as to the manner in which the study could have improved the cultural sensitivity or cultural competency of the research process.

In other instances of disagreements or concerns, the group reviewed the additional criteria categories to verify whether the textual evidence may have met the definition of another coding category. For instance, there was some question about whether textual evidence regarding the use of the term *bicultural* to describe members of a research team should be coded within the category of communication or whether bicultural should be coded in a separate category. The decision was made by the group that bicultural was not always synonymous with language and instead more accurately describe a researcher's ability to relate to and build trust with participants; therefore, evidence of a research team's members being bicultural was coded within the category of disclosure.

Data were improperly coded on the coding form in a few instances. In order to address this issue, the group discussed ways in which to improve the clarity and organization of the coding form such as changes to the design and labeling of the coding categories to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the coding process. Adjustments to the coding process included an agreement by the reviewers to document the exact

location within the article where the textual evidence was found either by documenting the page number or by making a notation on the article. This particular adjustment in the coding process was designed to improve the accuracy of the data-collection process and would provide a means of verification should there be any discrepancies in the data. The second training session concluded with the reviewers being given an additional five sample articles to be analyzed at the subsequent training session.

The third and final training session followed a similar format to the second session. The analyses of the five articles from the previous session were discussed, and, similar to the previous training sessions, the coding disagreements and questions were discussed and addressed as a group. The study codebook and coding scheme were further clarified until the group was satisfied with the changes. At the conclusion of the third training session, the reviewers agreed that sufficient changes had been made to the coding scheme and coding process and that they were prepared to perform an assessment of their inter-rater agreement level in order to make a determination whether further training was required or whether to enter the study phase.

The assessment phase involved an independent analysis of 10 journal articles. The purpose of the assessment phase was to evaluate whether the 90% inter-rater agreement level was achieved and to finalize any changes to the study codebook or coding scheme prior to moving into the study phase of the research. The reviewers were asked to document any questions or concerns they had during the analyses in order to further clarify any additional aspects of the codebook or coding process. The results of the assessment showed a 90% inter-rater agreement level, which indicated that the research could proceed to the study phase if agreed upon by the reviewers. The data from the 10

articles were not included in the final study. The group met to discuss the results of the assessment and to make any final changes to the study codebook or coding process prior to determining whether the group felt sufficiently prepared to move ahead with the study. The reviewer training was considered complete when the group came to a consensus that no further changes needed to be made to the study codebook, coding scheme, or coding process.

An essential element of all the training sessions was to document the development process and changes made to the study codebook, coding scheme, and coding process. The documentation of the coding development process and changes provides a rich description of the decision-making process and the development of the study, which can assist in the development of future studies and trainings. The documentation of the process and changes made to the codebook and coding scheme is found in Appendix D.

Coding Process

Upon completing the training phase of the study and having achieved the desired 90% inter-rater agreement, the reviewers entered the study phase of the research. The study phase began by assigning identification numbers from 1 to 138 based on the total amount of articles included in the study. Identification numbers were assigned in order to track the origin of the data accurately and to make it simple to refer back to an article in case its data needed to be verified. The numeric assignment did not indicate any particular value or significance, nor were the articles' contents known to the reviewers prior to the study. Of the 138 articles included in the study, the reviewers were each assigned 92 articles based on the requirement that each article be independently analyzed by two reviewers. The articles were equally distributed among the three reviewers in a

combination that allowed for half of a reviewer's assigned articles to be reviewed by each of the two other reviewers. Of the 138 total articles, 14 articles were excluded from the study after content was found within the articles that met the study's exclusionary criteria, such as articles that included multiple racial groups as part of the study or that were based on research performed with Latino populations outside of the United States.

Following the instructions within the study codebook, the reviewers began the review process by accessing blank quantitative and qualitative coding forms and selecting the first article from among those assigned to them. The reviewers then proceeded to record the article's identifying information, which included the article and journal title, author's name, article year, article identification number, and the name of the reviewer. The content analysis of the article's text included an examination of the article's introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion, and implication sections. The article's abstract and reference pages were used only to obtain identifying information about the article or the author.

The reviewers began each analysis by examining the article for textual evidence of the coding scheme criteria as described in the study codebook, which included the coding descriptions of the eight cultural competency criteria and the corresponding subcriteria. In this study, reviewers selected one of the eight cultural competency coding criteria at a time and examined the document for possible evidence of the criterion. The criterion was identified as being present when at least one of its corresponding subcriteria measurements was evident within the article. If evidence of the criterion was found within the article, a 1 was entered onto the coding form next to the criterion in the column entitled Criteria Present. The reviewer also indicated a 1 on the coding form in the

corresponding Measure column in order to identify the specific subcriterion found within the article. In addition to recording the quantitative data, the textual evidence of the criterion was recorded on the qualitative coding form within the corresponding coding category. If upon reviewing the article, the reviewer found no evidence of a particular criterion, a 0 was entered on the coding form next to the criterion in the Criteria Present column. In addition to examining articles for the study's primary variables (cultural competency criteria and subcriteria), the reviewers also documented data regarding the study's secondary variables (e.g., participant nationality, citizenship status, author profession) according to the classification descriptions indicated in the study's codebook.

Upon completion of the study phase, three meetings were held with the reviewers to compare the results of article analyses. The purpose of the meeting was to identify, discuss, and resolve coding disagreements found within the data. The coding disagreements were identified by comparing each reviewer's article-coding forms with the corresponding article-coding forms from the second reviewer. When coding disagreements were identified, the two reviewers of the article then discussed the rationale for their coding decisions. After discussing the rationale for their decisions, the two reviewers attempted to come to a resolution regarding a final coding decision. Disagreements found within the data primarily occurred as a result of one reviewer not having found evidence of a certain criterion within the document while the other reviewer documented that the criterion was present in the article. In such cases, the second reviewer presented the textual evidence, and a decision was made based on the evidence. In one instance, a reviewer indicated that there was no evidence of participant reciprocation within an article; however, the other reviewer presented evidence that the

author of the article mentioned that meals were provided to participants during a research training session. After presenting the evidence, the first reviewer agreed with the second reviewer that the short statement had been overlooked, that the evidence indicated that participant reciprocation was present, and that the data should reflect the evidence of the criterion. If a coding disagreement was not resolved between the two reviewers, the third reviewer was asked to review the disagreement in question and to come to a decision regarding the final coding of the data. The data were adjusted to reflect the final outcome of the decision-making process.

Reviewers achieved 94% overall initial agreement in the coding of the study articles. The initial agreement levels for two of the eight criteria were slightly below the study's proposed standard of 90% agreement level. Reviewers achieved 88.7% agreement on identity and power and 87.1% agreement on disclosure. Reviewers resolved disagreements and discrepancies in the data by conferencing with one another to discuss the evidence that supported the coding of each disputed data point. The reviewer conferencing was successful in resolving each disagreement, and, as a result, reviewers were in complete agreement regarding data that were included in the study results.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the coding forms were entered into SPSS to calculate the quantitative descriptive data, which included the variable frequencies. Inter-reviewer percentage agreement rates for this study were calculated using ReCal, which is an online reliability calculator used extensively by researchers and universities to calculate multiple reliability coefficients simultaneously (Freelon, 2013). The researcher entered the qualitative data from the coding forms into NVivo 10, and the additional reviewers

verified the accuracy of the data. The frequency and degree to which the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria were found within the social work journal articles were determined by performing a descriptive analysis of the quantitative data. A descriptive analysis allowed for the examination of each variable's major characteristics, namely its distribution, central tendency, and standard deviation. An analysis of the sample distribution provided a summary of the frequency for each of the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria that appeared within the social work articles. An analysis of the central tendency provided the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for each of the variables and allowed for an examination of the frequency and degree to which social work journals applied the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria.

A cross-tabulation analysis was used as a means of analyzing the relationship between the criteria frequencies and the four time periods included in the study. In addition to a cross-tabulation analysis, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether the utilization of the cultural competency criteria had significantly changed between 1990 and 2012. For this study, the 1990 to 2012 time frame was divided into four time periods: (a) 1990–1995, (b) 1996–2000, (c) 2001–2006, and (d) 2007–2012. A one-way ANOVA allowed for the statistical analysis of multiple group means and was used to examine the variance among those means and to examine whether the variance was statistically significant. The one-way ANOVA was used to compare the group means of the scores of the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria from each of the four time periods.

The 23-year time period was divided into four time periods based on scholarly

advances in the area of cultural competency as well as changes to cultural competency standards and practices implemented by NASW. The first time period consisted of journal articles published from 1990 through 1995. This span represents the time period prior to the publication of the eight cultural competency criteria by Meleis (1996) as well as the addition of cultural competency standards to the NASW *Code of Ethics* in 1996.

The second time period included journal articles published from 1996 through 2000. This category represents the time period in which Meleis (1996) published the eight cultural competency criteria and the 1996 NASW delegation adopted changes to the NASW *Code of Ethics* to include cultural competency standards. Both publications meant to increase the usage of culturally competent practices when working with culturally diverse populations.

The third time period included journal articles published from 2001 through 2006. This category represented the time period in which NASW (2001) published the *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*, which was intended to expand upon the cultural competency standards of the NASW *Code of Ethics* in order to further increase the level of culturally competent practice among social workers.

The final time period consisted of journal articles published from 2007 through 2012. In 2007, NASW published a document titled "Indicators for the Achievement of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice," which expounded upon the NASW (2001) cultural competency standards by identifying specific indicators or practices meant to improve the cultural competency of social work professionals.

The researcher and reviewers used NVivo 10 software to perform the qualitative

analysis of the textual data gathered during the review process. Qualitative data analysis was used to analyze the textual descriptions that corresponded to the quantitative data. The researcher and reviewers transferred the qualitative data from the coding forms into the NVivo software. This NVivo software allowed for the organization, management, and storage of the data during the coding process. The software also provided the ability to track the evolution of the coding process, providing insight into the qualitative analysis process and allowing the reviewers to carefully review the qualitative data.

This study used a directed approach to qualitative content analysis, which is frequently more structured than conventional qualitative analysis in that the directed approach is guided by an existing conceptual framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For this study, the coding scheme categories were structured using the descriptions of the eight cultural competency criteria and their respective subcriteria. The researcher and the reviewers independently coded all of the qualitative descriptions using the predetermined coding scheme categories. Once the qualitative data were organized according to the respective categories, the reviewers analyzed each category to determine if the codes could be further organized into new categories. If the reviewers found a text that represented a new category, they formed the category and classified the codes accordingly. Once the descriptions had been coded, the reviewers reviewed each of the categories to identify specific themes. The categorical themes were reviewed and refined until the reviewers agreed that categorical saturation had been reached. Ultimately, the qualitative coding process allowed the researcher to explore patterns and relationships among the data and make inferences based on the analysis. The coding themes derived from the qualitative analysis represent the range of the eight cultural competency criteria

and their subcriteria applied by researchers and scholars within journals of social work that examine the Latino population.

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative content analysis, the analytical processes and procedures involved in qualitative work should be monitored and reported in a complete and transparent manner (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). A reviewer meeting was held to discuss the coding decisions and to refine the categorical themes that had been identified. Each category was reviewed by the reviewers to ensure that the data were coded and categorized accurately and that the textual evidence supported the themes identified during the coding process. Upon reviewing the categories, the researcher and reviewers found instances in which additional coding categories were created based on subtle yet distinct differences that existed within the textual evidence. For example, upon reviewing the category of reciprocation, the researcher and reviewers decided to create a separate subcategory for the generic term *gift* rather than include the term within the category of monetary incentive since the word gift did not specifically indicate that it was a financial incentive. Reviewers also had the opportunity to provide feedback about the coding process as well as observations about the themes in the text. Reviewers found coding and analyzing the criteria categories of researcher context and researcher reciprocation to be particularly challenging based on the amount of textual evidence found within the articles that supported those criteria. Frequently, those specific categories included several paragraphs of text from each article, whereas other criteria categories were supported by textual evidence consisting of several words. The main thematic observations made by the reviewers included the general lack of evidence regarding participant input and involvement in social work

research as well as the relatively few articles that identified themes related to Latino males. The researcher documented the discussion topics covered in the reviewer meetings as part of the study codebook.

The qualitative portion of the content analysis followed several specific criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process and results. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested four criteria for evaluating qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four criteria are based on the traditional positivist terms of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility refers to accurate representation of the social construct being studied (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Triangulation of the data is an effective method by which credibility can be established (Lincoln, 1995). For this study, triangulation was accomplished by using a mixed-methods approach and by involving multiple independent reviewers during the coding and analysis of the data. The use of a mixed-methods approach allowed the quantitative data to be verified and supported by the qualitative data. The three independent reviewers used during the content analysis process provided triangulation of the data, as multiple perspectives were used in the coding and interpretation of the data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also discuss the need for transferability, which involves providing rich descriptions of the data and research process in order to provide future researchers the ability to apply the work in other settings and contexts. Transferability for this study was established as the researcher maintained a record of the research process, which includes the reviewer coding discussions and decisions as well as reviewer

feedback and personal observations. The description of the reviewer discussions and decisions regarding changes to the codebook, coding scheme, and coding process are addressed in Appendices D and E.

The dependability and confirmability of the qualitative content analysis served to establish the consistency of the study process and outcomes. Dependability refers to the internal consistency of the research process and the manner by which the researcher maintains fidelity to the study process, while confirmability refers to the consistency of research outcomes, data sets, interpretations, and study recommendations (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Both dependability and confirmability are frequently addressed by documenting the decisions and observations made throughout the entire research process. According to Zhang & Wildemuth (2009), documentation of the research process can include such items as field notes, memos, and coding manuals. To address both dependability and confirmability, the researcher kept a detailed account of the research process as part of the study codebook. In addition to documenting the details of the research process, the researcher ensured the dependability of the study by providing extensive training to the reviewers and making sure that the standard of inter-rater agreement was achieved prior to beginning the actual study. Dependability was also achieved as the researcher required the reviewers to perform the content analysis according to the review process and coding scheme found in the study codebook. Addressing each of the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as part of the qualitative analysis process helped ensure both the trustworthiness and rigor of this study.

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher of this study, I am currently a doctoral candidate in the college of social work at the University of Utah. I obtained a B.A. in Spanish and Family Studies from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah; an MSW from the University of Utah; as well as an MBA from the University of Phoenix. The ability to speak Spanish has allowed me to work in many social work capacities over the past decade with the inner-city and rural Latino populations of northern and central Utah. I have worked primarily with Latinos of Mexican origin, particularly those who are undocumented residents. A significant amount of my social work practice with Latinos has been in the form of direct practice and has included work as a case manager, community involvement liaison, and mental health therapist. My indirect social work practice experience has included supervisory positions in which I have managed resource programs to provide access to health care for uninsured and low-income patients in need of specialized treatment and prescription assistance. I have also assisted in the oversight of a community-based parent involvement program that worked in collaboration with Latino parents and local Title I schools. I have provided trainings and have taught graduate courses on the topic of cultural competency with a particular emphasis on social work practice with Latinos and Latino communities. I currently work as a licensed clinical social worker in an urban community health center in which I have the opportunity to work with Latino individuals, couples, and families who are facing psychosocial stressors or experiencing mental health issues. Working with Latino individuals and families as a clinical social worker significantly influenced my decision to explore the current research topic. I have often had questions about the methods that researchers use when studying Latino populations,

the implications that such methods may have upon researchers' conclusions and recommendations, and the impact of those recommendations on how social work professionals work with the Latino population.

Positionality of Research Assistants

The two reviewers who assisted with the research study added to the diversity of the research team, as each represented a unique cultural and ethnic background. The first reviewer was a middle-aged female who was born, raised, and educated in Mexico. She graduated with a degree in psychology from the University of Guadalajara and worked in rural Mexico with families whose heads of household had immigrated to the United States. She later immigrated to the United States and married a U.S. citizen. She recently graduated with her master's degree in social work. She has been employed with the Division of Child and Family Services for 10 years and works almost exclusively with Latino families. Her interests in working with the Latino community and improving the services provided to Latinos caused her to want to assist with the current research study. She felt that she did not have a predetermined assumption or bias about the manner in which social work researchers studied Latino populations and was simply curious about what she might find while reviewing the study articles. Being a first-generation Latina immigrant, she brought a unique perspective to this study, particularly when discussing the outcomes and implications of this study. At the conclusion of the study, she was surprised and disappointed by the lack of participant involvement in the research studies. She was particularly concerned about the frequent use of heterogeneous research samples in which first-generation undocumented immigrants of differing nationalities were combined with second- or third-generation U.S. citizens and in which the unique contexts

of the participants were rarely differentiated. Being from Mexico, she also expressed a sense of confusion about the terms used by researchers to describe the participants involved in the studies and was concerned about the negative implications that could occur as a result of the misuse or inaccuracy of the terms. For example, the terms Latinos or Hispanics were frequently used by researchers when discussing a study's results and recommendations, and yet the participants in many studies were almost exclusively of Mexican origin and therefore the recommendations would likely not apply to all Latinos. This reviewer's observations, such as the ones mentioned as well as many others, greatly assisted in the interpretations and conclusions of this study, and she felt she was able to make these observations in an objective manner.

The second reviewer was a male in his late twenties who describes himself as being racially and ethnically diverse; his parents have Spanish and Native American origins as well as French Canadian and English ancestry. He was born and raised in the United States and recently graduated with a master's degree in social work. His diverse background caused him to have an interest in working with culturally diverse populations, particularly immigrants to the United States; women and family issues in India; and health services in the Dominican Republic. His interest in further understanding cultural diversity led him to want to assist in this current study. He stated that he approached the study with curiosity and an open mind and reviewed the study articles without a predetermined assumption or bias about how social work research was performed with Latinos. His unique background allowed him to review the articles and provide insight into the study's outcomes from the perspective of a multiracial U.S. citizen. He made particular observations about the importance of social work researchers

considering participants' cultural and socioeconomic contexts when performing studies among Latinos, and was concerned with the lack of participant involvement in the research process. He hoped that his participation as a reviewer in this study helped provide further insight into cross-cultural research with diverse populations. He felt that he maintained an appropriate level of objectivity while reviewing the study articles as well as in the feedback and observations he provided regarding the study outcomes and interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

As an ethical consideration, my socioeconomic and cultural background should be acknowledged as being influential in the study's framework and design. My socioeconomic background as a White middle-class citizen from Utah has provided me many financial and societal privileges to access resources and participate in numerous opportunities that may not be as accessible to many inner-city or rural Latinos, particularly those that are of undocumented status. My desire to assist groups considered vulnerable or underserved led me to pursue and obtain a degree in social work. I recognize that I am not of the Latino race or ethnicity, and therefore I am unable to draw on personal experience as to cultural practices or contexts of Latino groups. Additionally, I maintain awareness that my experience with Latino culture is limited to the specific groups with whom I have worked in the local community and to the education I have received; thus, the knowledge I possess about Latino culture may in part be based on broad generalizations of Latino cultural practices and belief systems. The diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds of the two additional reviewers were a critical part of the triangulation and interpretation of the data. The reviewers were able to provide

perspectives as individuals who have personal experience with Latino culture, given that one reviewer is of Mexican origin and the other reviewer has familial ties to Latino heritage. Thus, the combined perspectives of the researcher and the reviewers formed an appropriate balance to assist in managing the biases and positionality of each reviewer.

Summary

This study used a content analysis approach to examine peer-reviewed social work journal articles published from 1990 to 2012 for culturally competent research practices used by social work researchers with Latinos in the United States. The research questions focused on examining cultural competency as reflected in social work journal articles on Latino populations. The coding process involved the creation and design of the study codebook, coding form, and reviewer training, which were each discussed in this chapter. Both quantitative and qualitative data collected during the content analysis were analyzed using both SPSS and NVivo 10 software. Necessary measures have been taken as part of the methodology and the data-analysis processes to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the study. The following chapter describes and summarizes the results of the analyses used to address the research questions presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes and summarizes the analyses used to evaluate the research questions outlined in the previous chapter. First, the descriptive data of the journal articles will be presented. Second, the results of the analysis of the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria found within the journal articles will be described. Finally, the thematic patterns developed from the textual data within each of the cultural competency criteria categories will be summarized and presented. The chapter ends with a summary.

Journal Articles

From 1990 to 2012, a total of 124 articles that examined Latino populations in the United States were found within the 13 social work–related journals included in the study. The 124 articles represent 1.4% of the total number of articles published in the social work journals selected for this study. Table 2 displays the 13 social work–related journals included in the study and the total number of articles reviewed from each journal.

Over one-third of the articles (*n*=46, 37.1%) were published by two journals, *Families in Society* and *Social Work,* contributing 26 (21%) and 20 (16.1%) articles, respectively. There were no articles found for review within *Administration in Social*

Work.

Annual Article Trends

Of the 124 articles included in the study, 67 (54%) were published after 2006. The years 1991 and 1992 had the fewest number of articles published, with one article each. The year 2011 contained the highest number of articles (*n*=13, 10.5%).

Table 3 displays the total number of articles divided into four time periods: 1990–1995, 1996–2000, 2001–2006, and 2007–2012. The rationale for assigning particular time periods is described in Chapter 3. The number of articles published during each time period has increased since 1990. Over 70% of the total number of articles were published during the two time periods from 2001 to 2012. The number of articles published during the final time period of 2007–2012 far surpassed the total number of articles published during the 1990s and comprised just under half of the total number of articles in the study.

The majority of articles (*n*=100, 80.6%) were written by social workers or social work faculty, two (1.6%) were written by psychology faculty, one (.8%) was written by a sociology faculty, and 21 (16.9%) of the articles did not indicate the particular profession of the author.

Table 4 features the nationality of the Latino populations addressed within the articles. The majority of the articles (*n*=64, 51.6%) referenced multiple Latino groups, and 26 (21%) articles did not specify the Latino group being addressed in the article. Of the 34 (27.5%) articles that addressed a specific Latino population, the highest percentage of articles (*n*=14, 11.3%) studied the Mexican American/Chicano population. Articles focusing on the remaining Latino populations within the United States comprised less

Table 2: Articles Reviewed by Journal

Journal	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Social Work	20	16.1
Research on Social Work Practice	12	9.7
Social Service Review	5	4.0
Health & Social Work	11	8.9
Social Work Research	12	9.7
Journal of Social Work Education	3	2.4
Families in Society	26	21.0
Administration in Social Work	0	0
Social Work in Health Care	13	10.5
Affilia	12	9.7
Journal of Social Service Research	3	2.4
Clinical Social Work Journal	4	3.2
Smith College Studies in Social Work	3	2.4
Total	124	100

Table 3: Articles Reviewed by Time Periods

Years	*Articles*	*Percentage*
1990–1995	11	8.9
1996–2000	26	21.0
2001–2006	29	23.4
2007–2012	58	46.8
Total	124	100.0

Table 4: Nationalities Addressed within Articles

Nationality	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Multiple nationalities	64	51.6
Unspecified nationalities	26	21.0
Mexican American/Chicano	14	11.3
Mexican	8	6.5
Puerto Rican	8	6.5
Central American	2	1.6
Cuban	1	.8
Dominican	1	.8
Total	124	100.0

than 10% of the total.

Table 5 shows the citizenship status of the Latino groups addressed within the articles. The highest percentage of articles (*n*=48, 38.7%) did not specify the citizenship status of the Latino group within the article, and 45 (36.3%) articles included Latinos of multiple citizenships. Twenty-six (21.0%) articles addressed Latino groups with U.S. citizenship, and five (4%) articles addressed the undocumented Latino population.

Table 6 displays the classification of the articles. The highest percentage of the articles (*n*=62, 50.0%) were classified as descriptive. Twenty-one (16.9%) articles were literature reviews, 15 (12.1%) were studies based on secondary data, 15 (12.1%) were interventions, 8 (6.5%) were classified as methodological, and 3 (2.4%) were experiential.

Table 7 features the research methodology applied within the articles. The highest percentage of the articles (*n*=52, 41.9%) applied quantitative research methods. Thirty-two (25.8%) used qualitative methods, and 10 (8.1%) applied a mixed-methods approach. The remaining 30 (24.2%) articles used other research methods such as secondary data analysis and literature reviews.

Frequency of the Eight Cultural Competency Criteria

Table 8 shows the frequency of the eight cultural competency criteria applied within the articles. The criteria *reciprocation* and *relevance* were each found in 124 (100%) of the articles, and *contextuality* was found in 123 (99.2%) articles. *Communication* and *disclosure* were found in 67 (54.0%) and 64 (51.6%) articles, respectively. *Identity and power* was found in 35 (28.2%) articles. *Empowerment* was found in 32 (25.8%), and *time* was found in 23 (18.5%) articles.

Table 5: Citizenship Status of Latino Groups within Articles

Citizenship Status	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Unspecified citizenship	48	38.7
Multiple citizenships	45	36.3
U.S. citizenship	26	21.0
Undocumented	5	4.0
Total	124	100.0

Table 6: Article Classification

Classification	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Descriptive	62	50.0
Literature review	21	16.9
Secondary data	15	12.1
Intervention	15	12.1
Methodological	8	6.5
Experiential	3	2.4
Total	124	100.0

Table 7: Research Methodology

Methodology	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Quantitative	52	41.9
Qualitative	32	25.8
Other Research Methods	30	24.2
Mixed Methods	10	8.1
Total	124	100.0

Table 8: Frequency of the Eight Criteria

Criteria	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Reciprocation	124	100
Relevance	124	100
Contextuality	123	99.2
Communication	67	54.0
Disclosure	64	51.6
Identity/Power	35	28.2
Empowerment	32	25.8
Time	23	18.5

Three of the eight criteria were applied in more than 99% of the articles, two criteria were applied in approximately 50% of the articles, and the remaining three criteria were each applied in less than 30% percent of articles.

Table 9 displays the frequency with which the total amount of the eight cultural competency criteria were applied within the articles. The amount of the eight criteria within an article has a possible range of zero (no evidence of the eight criteria) to eight (each of the eight criteria was found).

Five or more of the eight criteria were applied in over half of the articles (66; 53.3%). The most frequent number of the eight criteria applied within an article was three (32.3%). The mean of the eight criteria applied was 4.77 (SD=1.62). Eight (6.5%) articles achieved all eight criteria.

Frequency of the Cultural Competency Subcriteria

Subcriteria were used to measure cultural competency practices within each of the eight cultural competency criteria. Table 10 displays the frequency of the subcriteria within each of the eight cultural competency criteria categories.

Table 11 displays the frequency of the total number of subcriteria found within the journal articles. The amount of subcriteria within an article has a possible range of zero (no evidence of any subcriteria) to 26 (all subcriteria were met).

Six or more of the subcriteria were applied in over half of the articles (67; 54%). The most frequent number of subcriteria applied within an article was three (21%). The mean of the subcriteria applied within an article was 6.65 (SD=3.36). The median amount of the subcriteria applied within an article was six. The highest amount of subcriteria achieved was 15.

Table 9: Frequency of the Total Amount of the Eight Criteria

Number of Criteria	*Articles*	*Percentage*
2	1	.8
3	40	32.3
4	17	13.7
5	22	17.7
6	24	19.4
7	12	9.7
8	8	6.5
Total	124	100.0

Table 10: Subcriteria Frequency

Criteria	*Subcriteria*	*Articles*	*Percentage*
Reciprocation			
	Participant	30	24.2
	Community	4	3.2
	Researcher	124	100
Relevance			
	Participant	1	.8
	Community	4	3.2
	Social worker	2	1.6
	Researcher	124	100
Contextuality			
	Participant	3	2.4
	Community	1	.8
	Local context	52	41.9
	General context	122	98.4
Communication			
	Participant language accommodation	34	27.4
	Research materials	45	36.3
	Researcher cross-cultural communication	59	47.6
Disclosure			
	Participant trust	8	6.5
	Informed consent	35	28.2
	Trust building	55	44.4
Identity/Power			
	Participant involvement	11	8.9
	Community involvement	35	28.2
	Researcher positionality	14	11.3
Empowerment			
	Participant	16	12.9
	Community	2	1.6
	Researcher	21	16.9
Time			
	Participant time	9	7.3
	Time accommodation	17	13.7
	Research process	8	6.5

Table 11: Total Number of Subcriteria

Subcriteria Amount	*Articles*	*Percentage*
2	1	.8
3	26	21.0
4	17	13.7
5	13	10.5
6	11	8.9
7	9	7.3
8	13	10.5
9	12	9.7
10	6	4.8
11	3	2.4
12	3	2.4
13	3	2.4
14	3	2.4
15	4	3.2
Total	124	100.0

Cultural Competency Criteria Use from 1990 to 2012

A cross-tabulation description of the eight criteria's frequency by time period showed that from 1990 to 1995, no articles met more than six of the eight criteria. During the time periods of 1990–1995 and 2001–2006, no articles achieved all eight criteria. The time period from 2007 to 2012 had the most articles (n=6) that achieved all eight criteria. The results of a one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between the mean eight criteria scores of the four time periods.

Cultural Competency Subcriteria Use from 1990 to 2012

A cross-tabulation description of the subcriteria frequency by time period showed that from 1990 to 1995, no articles met more than nine of the subcriteria. The time periods of 1996–2000 and 2007–2012 each had at least one article that met 15 of the subcriteria, which was the highest score within the study sample. The results of a one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between the mean subcriteria scores of the four time periods.

Cultural Competency Criteria Thematic Patterns

In addition to gathering quantitative data during the content analysis process, reviewers also recorded qualitative descriptions of the textual evidence of the criteria as they appeared within the text of each article. This section addresses the thematic patterns of the eight criteria and subcriteria as coded by the reviewers. The eight cultural competency criteria in this section are presented according to the frequency with which researchers applied each criterion, beginning with the most frequent. The eight criteria are addressed in the following order: (1) reciprocation, (2) relevance, (3) contextuality,

(4) communication, (5) disclosure, (6) identity and power, (7) empowerment, and (8) time. The subcriteria themes within each of the eight criteria are presented according to the frequency with which researchers applied cultural competency practices within the theme, beginning with the most frequent.

Reciprocation

Reciprocation was among the most frequently found cultural competency criteria. This criterion was measured using three subcriteria, which examined reciprocation to the participants, the community, and the researcher. Of the 124 (100%) articles that applied reciprocation, 124 (100%) articles cited instances of researcher reciprocation, in which the research was used to benefit the social work profession by addressing issues relevant to the Latino population. The most common thematic categories of researcher reciprocation include the following: (1) knowledge development, (2) intervention development, and (3) measurement tool development.

Researcher Reciprocation

Knowledge development. The most common theme of researcher reciprocation was the development and expansion of knowledge about Latino populations. This category comprised articles whose purpose and final product were designed to provide descriptive information regarding micro-, mezzo-, and macroissues facing the Latino population. Textual descriptions related to researcher reciprocation through knowledge development are included below.

Regarding the development of knowledge, Androff and Tavassoli (2012) state: "Effective social work practice requires practitioners to be educated about the current

challenges faced by immigrants and their families" (p. 170).

"This article adds to the social work literature by providing a current literature review on key cultural variables, issues, and strategies that will help promote culturally responsive services to this population" (Furman et al., 2009, p. 173).

"These findings highlight the importance of health care providers being knowledgeable about spiritual and folk-healing practices so that they can be culturally competent when working with Central American immigrants" (Murguia, Peterson, & Zea, 2003, p. 48).

"Murals, as this article has pointed out, represent a lens from which social workers and other helping professionals can better understand and appreciate the Latino community's strengths and struggles for social justice" (Delgado & Barton, 1998, p. 355).

"The complex intersection between immigration status and social welfare and immigration policy requires that social workers have a relevant knowledge base in these areas" (Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007, p. 111).

Intervention development. The second most common theme of researcher reciprocation was the development of programs, models, and interventions in order to address the needs and issues facing the Latino population. Textual descriptions of the programs and interventions reciprocated by researchers included the following.

"Using information from this study, we have developed a pilot program to prepare Latino church leaders to undertake such activities" (Ames, Hancock, & Behnke, 2011, p. 165).

"The current practice model for Latinos can be used as a guide for critiquing state-of-the-art practice and developing cutting-edge practice across diverse Latino

problems and subpopulations" (Organista, 2009, p. 304).

Referring to the development of an intervention, Smokowski and Bacallao (2009) state:

> On the basis of the reports of parents who received a significant dose of the program, we concluded that Entre Dos Mundos/Between Two Worlds prevention was efficacious in lowering adolescent aggression, oppositional defiant behavior, attention problems, and symptoms of ADHD in acculturating Latino immigrant adolescents. (p. 175)

"This article has advocated a model of integration of behavioral health and primary care services for Latinos that is both empirically grounded and culturally based" (Manoleas, 2008, p. 450).

"A promising result was that the [Family Mentoring Program] mothers showed some positive results when compared to the standardized samples. At post-testing, family strength had improved to the point that they were no longer lower on this quality" (Barron-McKeagney, Woody, & D'Souza, 2002, p. 291).

Measurement tool development. The final researcher reciprocation category was the development of research measurement tools for use with Latino populations. The following are the textual descriptions of the development and validation of measurement tools by researchers.

"This effort represents a first step toward validating this instrument for Hispanic populations served by social work practitioners" (Alvelo, Collazo, & Rosario, 2001, p. 722).

Referring to the development of a measurement tool, Julia (1993) stated:

> By incorporating clients' identification of areas of satisfaction with services, the instrument has the potential for providing information that could be used in the improvement or development of the role of social workers in prenatal care settings, particularly with the Spanish speaking population. (p. 340)

"The results from this study suggest that the Children's Action Tendency Scale (CATS) is a consistent and accurate measure of aggressive tendency in Latinos" (Briggs, Tovar, & Corcoran, 1996, p. 234).

"Findings from this study indicate that the measurement of client satisfaction in Spanish-speaking populations differs in subtle but observable ways from the same process in English-speaking clients" (McMurty & Torres, 2002, p. 140).

"The availability of a Spanish version of a widely used instrument, with well-established validity and reliability, will allow further study of the immigration experience among the growing population of Spanish speaking immigrants to the United States" (Weiss & Berger, 2006, p. 197).

Direct Participant Reciprocation

Thirty (24.2%) articles cited tangible benefits provided to direct participants. The direct participant reciprocation themes included: (1) monetary incentive, (2) food, (3) gifts, (4) child care, (5) resource information, (6) transportation reimbursement, (7) entertainment activities, and (8) English courses. The most common participant reciprocation was monetary incentive. The following are the textual descriptions of participant reciprocation.

Monetary incentive. "Grandparents received $20 for participation, which clearly served as an incentive" (Burnette, 1999, p. 25).

"Participants were each paid $250 for their time" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

"Compensation was offered for focus group participation, at a rate of $30 per mother and $20 per adolescent" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 21).

"Respondents were paid $10 per hour for interviews, the same hourly rate negotiated by workers and activists at *las vias"* (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 76).

"Subjects were paid $30 for their participation" (Neff, Amodei, Valescu, & Pomeroy, 2003, p. 62).

Food. "Light refreshments and traditional foods are offered to reflect hospitality and to provide natural opportunities to socialize at the beginning and at the end of each session" (Barrio & Yamada, 2010, p. 487).

"In Latino households, holidays, celebrations, or merely social gatherings are always centered around food. For these reasons, including a meal within the group was a means of bringing the members together and recognizing an important part of their culture" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 114).

Gifts. "In recognition for the women's effort, we took small gifts for the babies and other children" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1997, p. 612).

"The mothers were given small gifts for their children as compensation for their participation" (Planos, Zayas & Busch-Rossnagel, 1997, p. 7).

Childcare. "For all these group meetings, child care…[was] provided for all participants and their children" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 143).

"This can be accomplished through flexible scheduling of sessions and the provision of child care" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012, p. 150).

Resource information. "All participants received a list of university-based Latino resources and social activities" (Gutierrez, 1995, p. 233).

"Grandparents received…an opportunity to get information on resources and services" (Burnette, 1999, p. 25).

Transportation reimbursement. "As an incentive for completing the screening interview, participants were given a round-trip subway card, valued at $3.00" (Moreno, Morrill, & El-Bassel, 2011, p. 90).

"Families completing both pre- and posttests and attending all three sessions were given $20 to assist with transportation costs" (Roby & Woodson, 2005, p. 20).

Entertainment activities. "Social/recreational events included a swimming party, a plane ride, an outing at a working farm, an appreciation dinner, and a fundraising activity" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 289).

English courses. "Optional intensive English lessons also were offered to the fathers" (Robbers, 2011, p. 171).

Community Reciprocation

Four (3.2%) articles cited tangible benefits to local communities. The three themes of community reciprocation include: (1) development of community programs, (2) training materials, and (3) research data for local policy makers. The following are the textual descriptions of community reciprocation.

Development of community programs. "Subsequently, UWMC funded four nonprofit organizations (two in Chicago and two in the Chicago suburbs)—to develop a community-based program for Latino youth" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 37).

"The results are being used to develop a parent-based adolescent risk-reduction intervention for Latino families" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 20).

"Using information from this study, we have developed a pilot program to prepare Latino church leaders to undertake such activities" (Ames et al., 2011, p. 166).

Training materials. "Training workshop participants received…Spanish-language

materials designed for church leaders" (Ames et al., 2011, p. 166).

Research data for local policy makers. "El Centro seeks to use these data to inform policymakers about the characteristics, opportunities, needs, and challenges of the Latino immigrant population in our area" (Lewis, 2008, p. 200).

Relevance

One of the most prevalent criteria found throughout the journal articles was relevance. Relevance was measured using four subcriteria that examined relevance according to the researcher, the community, local social workers, and participants. Of the 124 (100%) articles in which researchers applied the cultural competency criteria of relevance, 124 (100%) articles contained statements made by the research wherein the researcher identified the relevance of the research study to the Latino population. The textual descriptions of researcher relevance resulted in 18 main categories: (1) family/children, (2) health issues, (3) mental health issues, (4) Latina women, (5) adolescents, (6) communities, (7) cultural competency, (8) elderly people, (9) undocumented immigrants, (10) measurement tools, (11) partner violence, (12) HIV/AIDS, (13) substance use, (14) Latino men, (15) Latino characterization, (16) political/policy, (17) research, and (18) Latino social workers. Each of the 18 main categories contained several subcategories that identified the relevant topics that were addressed in the articles. A complete description of the researcher relevance categories is found in Appendix F.

Researcher Relevance

The five most prevalent researcher-relevance themes included the following: (1) family and children, (2) health issues, (3) mental health issues, (4) Latina women, and (5) adolescents. The following are textual examples of these themes relevant to social work researchers.

Family and children. "Mexican American family forms have been represented as pathological and deviant, not only because these fail to match the ideal, but because they are perceived as culturally and biologically different" (Mendez-Negrete, 2000, p. 43).

"If familial capital predicts academic achievement in third grade for Latino/a youth, then the availability of adequate opportunities to acquire, develop, and maintain such capital, skills, and experiences are [*sic*] crucial" (Williams & Dawson, 2011, p. 92).

Health issues. Referring to health issues, Corcoran, Dattalo, and Crowley (2012) state:

> The primary purpose of this systematic review, therefore, was to determine the magnitude and direction of the association between participation in an intervention to increase cancer prevention behavior among Latinas and the cervical screening (that is, PAP) rates of these participants. (p. 197)

"Insight into the influence of maternal attitudes on the experience of pregnancy may suggest culturally appropriate policies and programs that help maintain positive birth outcomes in women of Mexican descent" (Lucas, 2010, p. 948).

Mental health issues. "Results of effectiveness studies that test the adequacy and outcomes of depression treatments are essential for developing and implementing evidence-based practices aimed at improving the quality of depression care for Latinos" (Cabassa & Hansen, 2007, p. 495).

"It explores the relationships among stress, coping resources, social support, and

psychological well-being in a sample of Mexican American men and women who were in a low socioeconomic group" (Aranda, Castaneda, Lee, & Sobel, 2001, p. 38).

Latina women. "To date, however, no research studies have documented Hispanic/Chicana/Mexican American women's contributions to the community" (Lazzari, Ford, & Haughey, 1996, p. 198).

Referring to Latina women, Hancock (2007) states:

> This article explores the obstacle of illegal status to expanding views of self, more equitable gender roles in marriage, and mothering responsibilities for young working-class women from rural Mexico who have settled in rural communities and small towns of the United States. (p. 176)

Adolescents. "To provide conceptual direction to clinical and research efforts, this article presents a model for understanding the suicide attempts of adolescent Hispanic females in U.S. urban centers" (Zayas, Kaplan, Turner, Romano, & Gonzalez-Ramos, 2000, p. 53).

"These findings prompted our creation of a new bicultural skills training program called Entre Dos Mundos/Between Two Worlds to help Latino adolescents adjust to life in the United States and avoid the stress and problems associated with assimilation" (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2009, p. 168).

Community Relevance

Four (3.2%) articles cited the relevance of the given study to local community members. The four themes relevant to community members included the following: (1) Latino youth, (2) family planning, (3) immigrant needs, and (4) birth outcomes. Following are textual examples of the themes relevant to community members.

Latino youth. "The United Way of Metropolitan Chicago (UWMC) convened

citywide agency partners, service experts, and other community stakeholders to identify the most pressing issues affecting Latino youth" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 37).

Family planning. "The barriers to and the inhibitors of access to and use of family planning were also discussed, on the basis of the knowledge and experiences of the committee members" (Sable, Havig, Schwartz, & Shaw, 2009, p. 140).

Immigrant needs. "This survey was designed in partnership with Latino immigrant leaders working with El Centro to advance the general public's understanding of immigrant concerns and enhance leaders' ability to respond to community needs" (Lewis, 2008, p. 193).

Birth outcomes. In reference to the topic of birth outcomes, Sherraden and Barrera (1997) stated that "fieldwork began in 1990 when we undertook preliminary interviews with over 20 health and social service providers, researchers, and community leaders" (p. 611).

Social Worker Relevance

Two (1.6%) articles cited the relevance of the given study to the social workers in the study. The social workers in those articles identified HIV/AIDS groups and birth outcomes as relevant issues. Following are textual examples of the themes relevant to social workers involved in these studies.

HIV/AIDS groups. "In response to a need expressed by patients and providers, the Group was created at a multidisciplinary, comprehensive care center (the Center) committed to the treatment of adult [patients living with HIV] in New York City" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 114).

Birth outcomes. In reference to the topic of birth outcomes, Sherraden and

Barrera (1997) stated that "fieldwork began in 1990 when we undertook preliminary interviews with over 20 health and social service providers, researchers, and community leaders" (p. 611).

Direct Participant Relevance

Lastly, one (0.8%) article cited the relevance of the study to direct participants. In this article, an HIV/AIDS group was relevant to the participants. The following is the textual example of the theme that was relevant to direct participants: "In response to a need expressed by patients and providers, the Group was created at a multidisciplinary, comprehensive care center (the Center) committed to the treatment of adult [patients living with HIV] in New York City" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 114).

Contextuality

The criterion of contextuality was also among the most frequently applied criteria within the journal articles. Contextuality was measured using four subcriteria that examined the context of the research based on participants' descriptions, community members' contextual descriptions, local context descriptions, and general context descriptions of the Latino population. Of the 123 (99.2%) articles that applied contextuality, 122 (98.4%) articles cited the general context of the Latino population. Sixteen context themes were developed from the general context descriptions: (1) Latino population trends, (2) socioeconomic factors, (3) health issues, (4) Latina women, (5) Latino immigrant population, (6) mental health issues, (7) risk factors, (8) HIV/AIDS, (9) culture/language, (10) family/children, (11) acculturation, (12) protective factors, (13) policy/politics, (14) Latino diversity, (15) substance use, and (16) Latino social workers.

General Context Descriptions of the Latino Population

The five most prevalent themes in general context descriptions of the Latino population included the following: (1) Latino population trends, (2) socioeconomic factors, (3) health issues, (4) Latina women, and (5) Latino immigrant population. Following are the textual descriptions of the five most prevalent themes in general context descriptions.

Latino population trends. Referring to Latino population trends, Gant and Gutierrez (1996) state:

> The U.S. Latino population—individuals who trace their ancestry to Latin America—has grown rapidly in the past 20 years. Since 1980, the nation's Latino population has increased by 53 percent, compared to a growth rate of 9 percent for the rest of the population. (p. 624)

"Mexican Americans are by far the largest and fastest growing population of Latinos in the United States, accounting for 65% of U.S. Latinos and 9.7% of the entire U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009)" (Altschul, 2011, p. 159).

Socioeconomic issues. Regarding socioeconomic issues, Delgado and Barton (1998) state:

> The professional literature on Latinos has generally focused on the socioeconomic challenges facing this community. Latinos consistently have a disproportionate number of families in poverty; high rates of school dropout; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse; and HIV/AIDS, to list just four social problems. (p. 346)

"Latino immigrants or migrants may experience a loss or reduction in family or social supports in addition to the stress of economic hardship, language difficulties, and discrimination" (Cordero & Kurz, 2006, p. 46).

Health issues. "Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic women. An estimated 14,300 Hispanic

women are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 with an estimated 1,740 deaths" (Hughes, Leung, & Naus, 2008, p. 74).

Referring to health issues, Tijerina (2009) states:

> Primarily because of a higher incidence of type II diabetes (Pugh, Medina, Cornell, & Basu, 1995) and higher rates of complications from diabetes, Mexican Americans in the United States have as much as a six-times greater risk of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) than non-Hispanic white Americans. (p. 233)

Latina women. "A common factor in Hispanic/Chicana/Mexican American women's roles in family, employment, higher education, civic involvement, and leadership is the centrality of relationships" (Lazzari et al., 1996, p. 198).

"For recently immigrated Hispanic women, language barriers, economic hardships, cultural influences such as traditional gender roles, and a lack of integrated, accurate information influence the extent to which they access family planning services" (Sable et al., 2009, p. 137).

Latino immigrant population. Referring to the Latino immigrant population, Androff and Tavassoli (2012) state:

> Undocumented immigrants represented approximately 4 percent (11.9 million) of the U.S. population and 5.4 percent (8.3 million) of its workforce in 2008, a dramatic increase from 3.5 million in 1990 (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Seventy-six percent of undocumented immigrants are reported to be Hispanic, 59 percent (7 million) of whom are from Mexico. (p. 165)

Also referring to the Latino immigrant population, Campbell (2008) states:

> The majority of undocumented families come to the United States because of economic pressures in Mexico, including the devaluation of the peso, the negative effects of the North American Fair Trade Agreement, and the economic opportunities in the United States. (p. 231)

Local Context Descriptions

Fifty-two (41.9%) articles cited local context descriptions. The themes developed from local context information included the following: (1) population description, (2) location description, (3) socioeconomic situation, and (4) policy/political issues. Following are the textual descriptions of the local contextual themes.

Population description. "In Los Angeles County, which is home to the largest number of Latino older adults in the mainland United States, 40.2 percent of the 60-years-and-older population is of Latino origin" (Aranda, Villa, Trejo, Ramirez, & Ranney, 2003, p. 260).

"The use of cigarettes and illicit drugs partially account for these high rates of low weight births among pregnant Puerto Rican women in Hudson County in New Jersey" (Capello, 2006, p. 530).

Location description. "A small-scale survey of Latina beauty parlors was conducted in the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Lawrence is located about 35 miles north of Boston and has the highest concentration of Latinos in the state" (Delgado, 1997, p. 448).

Referring to location description, Chandler and Jones (2003) state:

> In Las Vegas—one of the most highly unionized cities in the nation—[Latinos] were able to obtain high-paying union jobs with excellent benefits. The Hotel Employees, Restaurant Employees Union—HERE—represents casino workers in both Reno and Las Vegas. (p. 256)

Socioeconomic situation. "Holyoke's Puerto Rican community has a disproportionate number of families living below the poverty level (59.1 percent); high school dropouts (60.0 percent); and not part of the labor force, with 27.1 percent unemployment" (Delgado & Barton, 1998, p. 354)

"All participants lived in economically disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, which may not be applicable to other Latino families residing throughout the United States" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 24).

Policy/political issues. *"*When the government funds local organizing, those 'grass-roots' efforts will continue only as long as the public dollars continue to flow" (Marquez, 2003, p. 335).

"The center was forced to close in 2007 after the town council voted to require that the organization's workers verify legal immigration status as a prerequisite for assisting prospective day laborers" (Cleaveland, 2011, p. 143).

Direct Participant Context Descriptions

Three (2.4%) articles cited the context provided by direct participants. Participant contextual themes included the following: (1) personal experiences, (2) description of environment, and (3) family background. Following are the textual descriptions of the direct participant contextual themes.

Personal experiences. "Jorge provided background information that proved to be pivotal" (Zayas, 2009, p. 297).

"At the age of 23 he was incarcerated in one of the most brutal environments on the Island, the Presidio where he was jailed for 7 years" (Mattei, 2008, p. 340).

Description of environment. "Reina described her first year in college as both exciting and liberating" (Mattei, 1999, p. 262).

"Rey lived on and off the streets" (Mattei, 2008, p. 340).

Family background. "Reina was the oldest of two children raised on the West coast by parents of Central American origin" (Mattei, 1999, p. 262).

"According to Rey, his father claimed him as his only child based on his skin color. Mother was dark skinned, father was light skinned" (Mattei, 2008, p. 340).

Community Member Context Descriptions

Lastly, one (0.8%) article cited the context provided by community members. The community members described their context by identifying the barriers to family planning facing the Latino population in the community. Following is the textual description of the contextual theme of barriers to family planning: "The committee held an initial meeting to discuss perceptions of Hispanic attitudes and beliefs related to health care, particularly to family planning. The barriers to and inhibitors of access to and use of family planning were also discussed" (Sable et al., 2009, p. 140).

Communication

Communication was measured using three subcriteria that examined participant language accommodation, research materials, and researcher cross-cultural communication. Of the 67 (54.0%) articles that applied communication practices, 59 (47.6%) articles cited that the researcher or research team had the ability to communicate cross-culturally. The cross-cultural communication abilities of research teams were coded into the following themes: (1) bilingual research staff, (2) generic references to Spanish speakers, (3) bilingual researcher, (4) community members, and (5) translator/interpreter. Following are textual descriptions of researcher efforts to provide bilingual or cross-cultural communication.

Researcher Cross-Cultural Communication

Bilingual research staff. "Two female bilingual/bicultural research assistants administered 60 surveys. 32.4% of the 74 interviews were conducted in Spanish. (Cordero & Kurz, 2006, p. 49).

"For participants with limited literacy, native Spanish-speaking research assistants administered the survey orally" (Xu & Brabeck, 2012, p. 212).

Generic references to Spanish speakers. "Interviewers were of Hispanic origin, and all respondents were interviewed in Spanish" (Zambrana, Ell, Dorrington, Wachsman, & Hodge, 1994, p. 94).

"Families were contacted by telephone during the day or evening by bilingual callers" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006, p. 172).

Bilingual researcher. "In the second phase, from May to August 2006, both researchers administered semi-structured interviews to migrant workers in Spanish" (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 76).

"Students possessed conversational Spanish-language skills, as assessed by the first author, who is bilingual, through an initial interview conducted in Spanish" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 143).

Community members. "One local health department–based bilingual outreach worker recruited women to the study" (Sable et al., 2009, p. 140).

Referring to the use of community members for cross-cultural communication, Abell, Ryan, Kamata, and Citrolo (2006) state that "English language items [were] subsequently translated into Spanish by an individual born and raised in Costa Rica, and examined by a panel of agency staff fluent in Spanish and acquainted with the reading

skills and language usage of agency clients" (p. 198).

Translator/interpreter. "Thus, the data collection instrument was first translated by an experienced Latina translator. An interviewer who had also worked as a translator and had extensive social work experience with low-income Latinos then scrutinized each question closely" (Burnette, 1999, p. 25).

"If they did not speak English, we conducted the interviews with a bilingual interpreter" (Chandler & Jones, 2003, p. 257).

Research Materials

Forty-five (36.3%) articles indicated that written research materials were offered in multiple languages or communication formats. The research material themes included the following: (1) translated measurement tools, (2) consent forms, (3) information materials (forms, books, and pamphlets), and (4) course curriculum materials. Following are the textual descriptions of the research material themes.

Translated measurement tools. "The 18-item scale was developed for Puerto Ricans in the United States and separately assessed involvement in the host society culture and culture of origin" (Cordero & Kurz, 2006, p. 49).

"Biculturalism was measured by using an adaptation of the biculturalism scale of the Latino Bicultural Assessment Questionnaire...developed by Camayd-Freixas and Amaro and designed to be used with any Latino population" (Gomez, 1990, p. 382).

Consent forms. "To increase understanding, staff members prepared all consent forms in English and Spanish and reviewed them with the mothers and adolescents" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 21).

"Informed consent was explained both orally and in written form in Spanish or

English and was obtained in writing before data collection" (Land & Guada, 2011, p. 21).

Information materials (forms, books, and pamphlets). "Owners were provided with posters, brochures, and other printed (Spanish) materials related to HIV/AIDS" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

"All recruitment messages or documents were translated into Spanish" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 39).

Course curriculum materials. "Sessions follow a psycho-educational curricula that had been culturally adapted for low-acculturated Mexican Americans" (Barrio & Yamada, 2010, p. 486).

Participant Language Accommodation

Thirty-four (27.4%) articles cited participant language accommodation. The themes associated with participant language accommodation included the following: (1) language preference options, (2) language assistance services, and (3) cultural communication adaptations. Following are the textual descriptions of the communication preferences themes:

Language preference options. "At initial contact, the researcher established participants' language preference (English or Spanish)" (Tijerina, 2009, p. 35).

"Respondents were given the choice of being interviewed in either English or Spanish. When given the choice, the majority of respondents (87%) chose to be interviewed in Spanish" (Tran & Williams, 1998, p. 67).

Language assistance services. "If they did not speak English, we conducted the interviews with a bilingual interpreter" (Chandler & Jones, 2003, p. 257).

"If participants were unable to read, SPNS project staff read the consent form to

them and answered any questions. Interviewers ensured that all participants understood the contents of the informed consent prior to signing" (Keesee, Natale, & Curiel, 2012, p. 466).

Cultural communication adaptations. "However, every effort was made to use examples from the Latino community and to use a vocabulary that was sensitive to the cultural background of the participants" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

"Since many parents were assumed to be undocumented, they were asked to provide oral consent in order to facilitate recruitment and maximize confidentiality" (Carrion, Castaneda, Martinez-Tyson, & Kline, 2011, p. 831).

Disclosure

Disclosure was measured using three subcriteria that examined researchers' efforts to build trust, the informed consent process, and participants' trust in the research process. Of the 64 (51.6%) articles that applied disclosure, 55 (44.4%) articles cited researchers' efforts to build trust with participants. The themes that resulted from the descriptions of the researchers' efforts to build trust included the following: (1) familiar settings, (2) bicultural staff, (3) similar cultural background, (4) prolonged engagement, (5) familiar community members, (6) similar experiences, (7) culturally appropriate communication, (8) reassurance, and (9) reciprocation efforts. Following are textual descriptions of the themes related to researchers' efforts to build trust.

Researchers' Efforts to Build Trust

Familiar settings. "Of the interviews, 24 were conducted in the women's homes; the others were held in public places of the women's choosing" (Weinberg, 2000, p. 206).

"The study ran three groups at two central locations that offered ample parking and allowed us to provide on-site child care" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 143).

Bicultural staff. "These interviews, which averaged one to two hours, were conducted by a bilingual and bicultural investigator and research assistant who were proficient in Spanish and the Mexican culture" (Applewhite, 1995, p. 248).

"For example, for the parent education sessions, the staff had to make sure that group leaders were biculturally competent" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 291).

Similar cultural background. "When possible, they were matched to respondents on the basis of language, gender and national origin" (Burnette, 1999, p. 25).

"In our study, we were careful to match interviewer and respondent characteristics ethnicity, gender, and language and to train interviewers about the importance of establishing confianza and personalismo with respondents" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 240).

Prolonged engagement. "Observation from May to September 2005 included attending weekly workers' meetings at a Catholic church, driving workers to appointments, informal socializing, and joining Freehold workers at a national day laborer conference" (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 76).

"Spending ample time (sometimes up to half an hour or longer) explaining the project and getting to know the women on the telephone significantly reduced the refusal rate" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1996, p. 301).

Familiar community members. "These high participation rates are likely the result of having case managers, with whom clients had long-standing relationships, approach subjects initially to explain the study" (Neff et al., 2003, p. 62).

"I enlisted the assistance of community leaders, who identified potential interviewees and helped me gain access and permission to interview the women" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

Similar experiences. "All interviewers had experience working with older Latinos" (Burnette, 1999, p. 25).

"The first author speaks Spanish fluently and was previously trained to teach the dynamics of domestic violence, she provided direct services to the immigrant Mexican community in a clinical social work practice setting" (Fuchsel, Murphy, & Dufresne, 2012, p. 271).

Culturally appropriate communication. "Providing the materials and communication in the participant's desired language may have greatly facilitated the whole process" (Hughes et al., 2008, p. 77).

"Her ability to conduct the interviews in Spanish might have allowed the participants to convey more details because they might have trusted her more" (Fuchsel et al., 2012, p. 271).

Reassurance. "The interviews were anonymous and confidential, and participants were reassured that participation would not have an effect on services they received at the clinic" (Murguia et al., 2003, p. 46).

"Mothers and adolescents were assured of the confidentiality of all focus group data and informed of the importance of their contribution to improving adolescent outcomes in their community" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 21).

Reciprocation efforts. "These rewards and personal attention may have positively influenced participation" (Hughes et al., 2008, p. 86).

The Informed Consent Process

Thirty-five (28.2%) articles cited that informed consent was obtained or reviewed with participants. The themes resulting from the informed consent process included the following: (1) obtaining written forms of consent, (2) explanation of consent, (3) additional reassurance, (4) verbal consent, (5) passive parental consent, and (5) letters of consent. Following are the textual descriptions of the themes from the informed consent process.

Obtaining written forms of consent. "Each youth participant completed a written consent form and submitted a parental permission form" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 40).

"Informed consent was explained both orally and in written form in Spanish or English" (Land & Guada, 2011, p. 97).

Explanation of consent. "These meetings entailed explaining why the information was needed, signing consent and release forms" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 288).

"Few of our respondents had ever participated in a research study and initially were somewhat wary of signing forms until their purpose was carefully explained by trained interviewers" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 237).

Additional reassurance. "Initially, assurances of confidentiality put the women at ease" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1996, p. 301).

"We followed a memorized interview guide and taped the interview after obtaining permission, establishing rapport, and reassuring them that we would not use their names on tape" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1997, p. 612).

Verbal consent. "Adult participants provided verbal consent" (Ridings et al.,

2010, p. 40).

"Since many parents were assumed to be undocumented, they were asked to provide oral consent in order to facilitate recruitment and maximize confidentiality" (Carrion et al., 2011, p. 831).

Passive parental consent. "Passive parental consent was obtained for children to complete surveys evaluating the efficacy of the intervention" (Marsiglia, Yabiku, Kulis, Nieri, & Lewin, 2010, p. 9).

"Parents of participating students were sent a letter explaining the purpose of the study, giving their passive consent" (Voisine, Parsai, Marsiglia, Kulis, & Nieri, 2008, p. 267).

Letters of consent. "Each participant received a letter describing the purpose, scope, risks, and benefits of the research. In conformity with approval from the institutional review board at the University of South Carolina, the letter served as informed consent" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

"The parents of participating students were sent a letter explaining the purpose of the study" (Voisine et al., 2008, p. 267).

Participants' Trust in the Research Process

Lastly, eight (6.5%) articles cited concerns or issues related to trust on the part of the study participants. The themes related to participant trust included the following: (1) concerns with consent, (2) fear of stigma, (3) comfort level, (4) study content, (5) confidentiality concerns, (6) undocumented status, and (7) wariness about interview process. Following are the textual descriptions of the themes related to participant trust.

Concerns with consent. "We found that the necessity of signing a release form

before having any contact with the research staff elevated anxiety in some prospective respondents and was viewed with suspicion, especially by those who were undocumented" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 237).

"Most participants refused to give consent to have their extended families interviewed" (Roldan, 2003, p. 379).

Fear of stigma. "Given this initial low rate of recruitment and studies that underscore that Latinos fear being labeled 'insane'" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 141).

"The stigma of AIDS present in the Latin community can increase refusal rates for a number of reasons" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 236).

Comfort level. "All the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, which were the preferred sites of all the women, probably because of the issues of…comfort level" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

"The Group's design involved implementing characteristics that fostered a sense of safety, support, and closeness among members in an effort to ensure that members felt comfortable sharing feelings, expressing opinions, and taking risks" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 114).

Study content. "In addition, the sample had a high refusal rate, which was probably a result of the sensitive content of the study" (Moreno et al., 2011, p. 95).

Confidentiality concerns. "Initially, assurances of confidentiality encouraged the women to talk" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1997, p. 612).

Undocumented status. "Because some prospective respondents were undocumented, they were reticent to speak readily with unknown professionals or perceived government bureaucrats" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 236).

Wariness about interview process. "Migrants were wary of being interviewed unless introduced by activists known to be supportive" (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 80).

Identity and Power

The criterion of identity and power was measured using three subcriteria that examined participant involvement in the research, community member involvement in the research process and researcher positionality. Of the 35 (28.2%) articles that applied identity and power, 23 (18.5%) articles cited the involvement of community members in the research process. The themes related to community involvement in the research process included the following: (1) assisting in research design and development, (2) research material development, (3) community perspectives on the issue being studied, (4) interpreting findings, (5) member checking, (6) helping to promote the research study, (7) training and leadership, and (8) assisting research participants. Following are the textual descriptions of the themes related to community members' involvement in the research process.

Community Member Involvement in the Research Process

Assisting in research design and development. "The intervention and study developed as a multidisciplinary effort between social workers and community health workers to reach out to the Spanish-speaking Latino population of the area" (Roby & Woodson, 2005, p. 18).

"Field work began with interviews with more than 20 health and social service providers, researchers, and community leaders in Chicago's Latino community. We designed research procedures and interviews based on their suggestions" (Sherraden &

Barrera, 1996, p. 300).

Research material development. "Before these focus groups were conducted, an advisory committee was formed to help develop a discussion guide for the groups" (Sable et al., 2009, p. 139).

"This draft was then distributed to a sample of Spanish-speaking professionals at local human service agencies, and their suggestions were used to make further adjustments that resulted in a final version" (McMurty & Torres, 2002, p. 128).

Community perspectives on the issue being studied. "We were interested in knowing whether community members and domestic violence experts who worked with immigrant Mexican women had encountered the concept of familismo and whether they understood it to be a barrier or a type of support" (Fuchsel et al., 2012, p. 266).

"I sought the perspectives of health and social service providers who were familiar with the needs of undocumented Mexican mothers in the community" (Belliveau, 2011, p. 35).

Interpreting findings. "An elder advisory committee provided guidance and helped interpret the findings" (Delgado & Tennstedt, 1997, p. 127).

Member checking. "Feedback meetings were held with community members to conduct member checks and explore alternative interpretations" (Xu & Brabeck, 2012, p. 213).

Helping to promote the research study. "Several key leaders in the Latino community publicly endorsed the study, encouraging recruitment and participation" (Burnette, 1999, p. 24).

Training and leadership. "Case managers for teenage parent services participated

in most phases of the study including serving as group leaders" (Harris & Franklin, 2003, p. 73).

"The all-day training was conducted in Spanish by the HIV/AIDS worker" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

Assisting research participants. "Spanish-speaking trained volunteers were available to assist the research participants in completing the questionnaires as needed" (Roby & Woodson, 2005, p. 19).

Researcher Positionality

Fourteen (11.3%) articles cited the researcher's recognition of his or her positionality. Researcher positionality themes included: (1) importance of personal relationships, (2) researcher reflexivity, (3) awareness of researcher influence, and (4) cultural awareness. Following are the textual descriptions of researcher positionality themes:

Importance of personal relationships. "The barriers we encountered in attempting to arrange focus groups with this population illustrate how difficult it can be for 'outsiders' to gain entry to the Latino community" (Ames et al., 2011, p. 165).

"We took as much time as was needed to get to know each other and for the women to bring up issues and concerns of their own and did not start the tape recorder until we had established rapport with the interviewee" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1996, p. 301).

Researcher reflexivity. "Researchers enhanced objectivity and reduced bias by keeping a journal to monitor thoughts and feelings about the research. Another strategy included discussing preconceptions with a research team" (Valadez, Lumadue, Gutierrez,

& Vries-Kell, 2005, p. 386).

Referring to researcher reflexivity, Fuchsel et al., (2012) state:

> Because the first author has professional experience as a clinical social worker with victims of domestic violence, the data analysis may have been biased. Thus, we implemented journaling, peer debriefing, and memoing throughout the study to keep any bias in check. (p. 266)

"Culture-specific expertise (that is, possessing an understanding of one's own individual world views and knowledge of the culture with which one works)" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 112).

"This approach reflects the ethnographic emphasis on 'knowing with' participants rather than dictating knowledge" (Cleaveland, 2010, p. 76).

Awareness of researcher influence. "Participants also may have wanted to express their gratitude for the incentives by giving the researchers the perceived desired answers, although they were not suggested" (Roby & Woodson, 2005, p. 28).

"In-depth interviews allowed us to build trust and encourage forthrightness, avoiding anxieties that are often associated with institutional settings and 'official-sounding' interviews" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1997, p. 611).

Cultural awareness. "Applied to research, it is suggested that failure to account for culture and social position in methodology can lead to generalizations that are distorted at best and stereotypical and ultimately harmful in the worst-case scenario" (Jani et al., 2009, p. 193).

"Careful consideration was taken to use this knowledge in ways that did not stereotype the target audience, but instead recognized the power of culture's influence on patient experience and behavior" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 112).

"Such procedures serve to heighten the authenticity of the interview; in addition,

they reduce responses reflecting trait and social desirability and acquiescence, responses particularly noted among Latinos" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 8).

Participant Involvement in Research

Lastly, 11 (8.9%) articles cited the participation in the research process of direct participants. Participant involvement included the following: (1) member checking, (2) input into the research process, (3) providing feedback, (4) identifying material for the study, (5) interpretation of the findings, and (6) participation on a research steering committee. Following are the textual descriptions for participant involvement in the research process.

Member checking. "The women were encouraged to be an integral part of the data analysis process. When questions arose regarding the content or meaning of specific quotes, I double-checked with the participants for clarification" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

"The researcher used member checking to obtain feedback from participants about interpretations made from the data" (Tijerina, 2006, p. 63).

Input into the research process. "Problems in item understanding were identified, discussed with the participant, and their recommendation for item clarity was elicited" (Alvelo et al., 2001, p. 704).

"Members felt strongly about adding new participants, stressing that they hoped to reach more patients like themselves. I honored the members' decision. (Acevedo, 2008, p. 114).

Providing feedback. "At this stage, family members and providers share lessons learned with the other in reviewing and consolidating treatment gains and plans for the future" (Barrio & Yamada, 2010, p. 486).

"Participants were asked about different components of the interventions and what activities they found most helpful. They were also asked to suggest areas for improvement" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 142).

Identifying material for the study. "Conversación B included themes identified through separate focus group sessions with Latino elders and adult children of Latino elders to identify material that they believed to be important for end-of-life discussions" (Heyman & Gutheil, 2010, p. 19).

Interpretation of the findings. "The meeting was used to discuss the interpretation of data and how to implement relevant strategies" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 42).

Participation on a research steering committee. "Two separate steering committee subgroups were formed (one for adult members and one for youth members)" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 39).

Empowerment

Empowerment was measured using three subcriteria that examined the knowledge or skills that were acquired as a result of the research. The three subcriteria addressed the following: (1) participant empowerment, (2) community member empowerment, and (3) researcher empowerment. Of the 32 (25.8%) articles in the study in which empowerment was applied, 21 (16.9%) articles cited evidence of researcher empowerment. Researcher empowerment examines a researcher's acknowledgement of ways in which the research could have better accounted for cultural factors. The themes related to researcher empowerment include the following: (1) reflecting on research methods, (2) acknowledging challenges during the research process, and (3) understanding cultural

factors. Following are the textual descriptions of researcher empowerment themes:

Researcher Empowerment

Reflecting on research methods. "A qualitative component in future research could contribute needed in-depth knowledge about the meaning of hopelessness and why it emerges among different individuals and in different social contexts" (Marsiglia et al., 2011, p. 16).

"In our study of Latinas, we often found a preference for a dichotomous response. When respondents had difficulty with the Likert format, we found most useful a two-tier method" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 15).

"A series of classes without incentives would also determine if the participants' responses were influenced by a sense of obligation or a desire to please" (Roby & Woodson, 2005, p. 28).

Acknowledging challenges during the research process. "Response rates were lower than desired, and hampered by the daily strain faced by potential respondents as well as our limited options for providing incentives" (Abell et al., 2006, p. 210).

"More specifically, issues such as transportation, travel distance, and funding should be considered" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 119).

Understanding cultural factors. "The barriers we encountered in attempting to arrange focus groups with this population illustrate how difficult it can be for 'outsiders' to gain entry to the Latino community" (Ames et al., 2011, p. 165).

Keesee, Natale, and Curiel (2012) state that:

> We are aware of a number of limitations present in this study including…the potential errors in data collection because of language translation and use of multiple interviewers. Although not intended, variations in regional language

interpretation may have been present. (p. 474)

"Although special care was taken to avoid Spanish regionalisms, it seems reasonable to question whether the items of the MPSI would prove to be as effective with other Hispanic groups as with Puerto Ricans" (Alvelo et al., 2001, p. 722).

Participant Empowerment

Sixteen (12.9 %) articles cited that participants gained a particular skill or knowledge as a result of the research. Themes based on empowerment related to knowledge or skills acquired by participants included the following: (1) mental health information, (2) parenting skills, (3) health improvement, (4) behavioral improvements, (5) academic achievement, (6) social support, (7) substance abuse education, (8) domestic violence courses, (9) personal finances, (10) political empowerment, and (11) gang education. Following are the textual descriptions of these themes related to the empowerment resulting from knowledge or skills acquired by direct participants.

Mental health information. "A representative comment from a mother emphasized that with increased 'knowledge' came increased 'understanding' and described this process as 'transformative' in viewing their loved one as a 'person' separate from the 'illness.'"(Barrio & Yamada, 2010, p. 489).

"During the group sessions, participants were taught to recognize how their thoughts, behaviors, and social interactions affect depressed mood, and to make changes to improve mood" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 143).

Parenting skills. "Parents meet weekly with a group facilitator to discuss and practice parenting skills and ways to become involved in their adolescents' lives" (Tapia, Schwartz, Prado, Lopez, & Pantin, 2006, p. 157).

"Parents were invited to all of these social activities and were also offered educational programs on…parenting skills" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 289).

Health improvement. "There was substantial individual improvement in physical fitness" (Hughes et al., 2008, p. 83).

Regarding the theme of health improvement, Acevedo (2008) states:

> Although I was able to provide didactic knowledge, among peers and through their personal experiences, members dispelled common myths about HIV and imparted valuable information with regard to issues such as adherence to ART, relating to health care providers, and the negotiation and use of safer sex practices. (p. 118)

Behavioral improvements. "The benefits of this parental investment in the program were substantial, evidenced by large effect sizes for decreases in adolescent aggression and oppositional defiant behavior" (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2009, p. 175).

On the topic of behavioral improvements, Mendez-Negrete, Saldaña, and Vega (2006) state:

> As of the beginning of 2004, none of the program participants have dropped out of school, none of the program participants have become pregnant, program participation continues, and preliminary measures suggest that program participants are benefiting socially and developmentally. (p. 102)

Academic achievement. "These are tangible results that lead to better school performance and if maintained could lead to high school completion of these youths" (Harris & Franklin, 2003, p. 80).

"Preliminary measures suggest that program participants are benefiting socially and developmentally, and, perhaps, even academically from the program" (Mendez-Negrete, et al., 2006, p. 102).

Social support. "Specific benefits include (a) the sense of community and support the group provided; (b) the personal attention; (c) comfort in learning that others

experience similar dilemmas" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 145).

"Of particular significance were the social relationships that members forged with peers with whom they would not have had contact if not for the Group" (Acevedo, 2008, p. 118).

Substance abuse education, domestic violence courses, and personal finances. "The participants were part of a 10-week, agency-based closed support group for women. Each week, they discussed facilitator-chosen topics related to women's issues (such as domestic violence, parenting, substance use, and finances)" (Fuchsel et al., 2012, p. 265).

Political empowerment. "Participants in the consciousness-raising group were able to move quickly from a consideration of common cultural traits and values to an awareness of the political nature of their status as Latinos" (Gutierrez, 1995, p. 9).

Gang education. "Parents were invited to all of these social activities and were also offered educational programs on gang prevention" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 289).

Community Member Empowerment

Lastly, two (1.6%) articles cited evidence that community members were empowered by gaining additional knowledge or skills as a result of the research. The themes of community empowerment included the following: (1) training and training materials for community members and (2) development of active partnerships among researchers, community members, and local businesses. Following are the textual descriptions of these themes related to community empowerment.

Training and training materials for community members. On this topic, Ames, Hancock, and Behnke (2011) stated:

> Using a train-the-trainers model, we recruited and trained bilingual social workers, cooperative extension agents, health professionals, *promotoras* (lay health workers), and domestic violence professionals to educate Latino church leaders in their local communities. (p. 166)

Development of active partnerships. "These triadic partnerships increase the likelihood that projects will help their ultimate beneficiaries—the community" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

Time

Time was measured using three subcriteria that examined the impact of time on participants and the research process. The three subcriteria addressed the following: (1) impact on participants' time, (2) time accommodations, and (3) impact of time on the research process. Of the 23 (18.5%) articles that applied the criterion of time, 17 (13.7%) articles cited that time accommodations were made in order to meet the needs of direct participants. The time accommodation themes included the following: (1) meeting with participants on evenings or weekends, (2) arranging a convenient date and time based on participant preference, (3) limited number of meetings, (4) performing research during the summer months, and (5) selecting a convenient research setting. Following are the textual descriptions of these themes related to time accommodations.

Time Accommodations

Meeting with participants on evenings or weekends. "Focus groups were scheduled on the weekend because this was believed to be the most convenient time for working parents and their adolescents" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 21).

"The training of the two shop owners consisted of eight hours of instruction provided on a Sunday. This scheduling facilitated participation because the businesses

did not have to close for the owners to receive training" (Delgado & Santiago, 1998, p. 185).

Arranging a convenient date and time based on participant preference. "The interviews were conducted at a variety of times to meet the needs of each participant" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

"An appointment for an interview was scheduled at a time and place convenient for her" (Lucas, 2010, p. 949).

Limited number of meetings. "Based on this research, we determined that parents would have difficulties attending multiple face-to-face sessions" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012, p. 150).

Performing research during the summer months. "We used the [Concept System] (CS) method to generate more equitable stakeholder input by…scheduling the youth meetings during the summer months to accommodate their school schedule" (Ridings et al., 2010, p. 45).

Selecting a convenient research setting. Regarding the use of a convenient research setting, Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2012) state that "Having a trained social worker deliver the intervention in a primary healthcare clinic to parents when adolescents visited their physician for a routine physical exam… helped ensure that families could access the program at a convenient time and location" (p. 150).

Impact on Participants' Time

Nine (7.3%) articles cited the impact of time on direct participants. The themes regarding the impact of research on participant time included the following: (1) time and place accommodations, (2) cultural considerations, and (3) transportation arrangements.

Following are the textual descriptions of these themes related to the impact of research on participant time:

***Time and place accommodation*s.** "Nine women were stay-at-home mothers and preferred to be interviewed when their children were at school, whereas those who worked chose to be interviewed in the evenings and on weekends" (Campbell, 2008, p. 234).

"Participants…were asked to select a time and place most convenient for an interview" (Applewhite, 1995, p. 3).

Cultural considerations. "In-home interviewing was generally preferable to these respondents and had several advantages. First, the women often care for more than one person, and they may be needed in their homes" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 7).

Transportation arrangements. "Mentors had to arrange to pick up children, usually at their homes, but occasionally at the CAC, and return them" (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 288).

Impact of Time on the Research Process

Lastly, eight (6.5%) articles cited the impact of time on the overall research process. The themes related to the impact of time on the research process included: (1) time constraints and challenges and (2) extending the amount of research time. Following are the textual descriptions of these themes related to the impact of time on the research process:

Time constraints and challenges. "[Mentors] encountered numerous, mostly unavoidable, barriers to setting up and maintaining regular mentoring contacts-- for example…difficulty reaching families due to long working hours or relocations" (Barron-

McKeagney et al., 2002, p. 289).

"For reasons of safety and confidentiality, we were approved to conduct interviews at only one point in time with each participant" (Fuchsel et al., 2012, p. 265).

"However, there are limitations to in-home interviewing; these include interruptions and, at times, lack of privacy. These issues can be minimized when discussed in the pre-interview contact" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 7).

Extending the amount of research time. "They recommended an hour and a half and that the group sessions would be ongoing (past the 10 week mark)" (Piedra & Byoun, 2012, p. 146).

"Interviewers should be trained to allow respondents sufficient time to talk and respectfully refocus the respondent. This procedure often yields positive results" (Land & Hudson, 1997, p. 8).

"We took as much time as was needed to get to know each other and for the women to bring up issues and concerns of their own and did not start the tape recorder until we had established rapport with the interviewee" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1996, p. 301).

The significance of and insight gained from the qualitative themes identified throughout this section are addressed in Chapter 5.

Summary

This chapter contained a description of the study's quantitative and qualitative findings and summarized the analyses used to evaluate the research questions outlined in Chapter 3. The descriptive data of the journal articles were presented. The results of the analyses of the eight cultural competency criteria and their subcriteria were described.

The results of the analysis examining the utilization of the eight cultural competency criteria within social work journals articles from 1990 to 2012 were presented. The thematic categories and the textual data from the qualitative analysis were summarized and presented. The following chapter discusses the implications and limitations of the study findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the implications of the results presented in Chapter 4. First, the application of the cultural competency criteria will be discussed in terms of its relationship to the theoretical framework and the previous literature on the topic of cultural competency. Second, the articles that achieved the highest amounts of cultural competency criteria will be discussed. Third, the use of the cultural competency criteria from 1990 to 2012 will be addressed. Fourth, the limitations of the study will be discussed. Lastly, the research implications and suggestions for future research will then be presented. The chapter ends with a conclusion statement.

Application of the Cultural Competency Criteria

Understanding the use of cultural competency criteria by social work researchers allows for a discussion regarding the areas in which social work researchers are consistently demonstrating cultural competencies as well as the areas that may require further attention in order to increase the frequency of the criteria being applied. The results of the content analysis showed that the frequency with which social work researchers applied the cultural competency criteria varied significantly. In some instances, several criteria were found within every article, while other criteria were found in fewer than half of the journal articles. The potential reasons that some criteria were

found more frequently than others will be addressed throughout this section. The frequency with which social work researchers applied the cultural competency criteria will also be discussed within the framework of co-cultural theory and compared with the commonly accepted cultural competency standards found in the literature. The findings within this section are discussed in order of the frequency in which they were found within the journal articles, beginning with the criteria most often applied by social work researchers.

The principal findings of the research show that researchers applied three of the eight cultural competency criteria on a consistent basis: reciprocation, relevance, and contextuality. Each of these criteria was applied in over 99% of the articles. These findings are significant when discussed in terms of their importance within the context of performing culturally competent research. Reciprocation is designed to ensure that the research is benefiting the population as well as the various stakeholders impacted by the study. Relevance involves making certain that research topics relate to the needs of the population and to the profession. Contextuality is intended to ensure that the participants' and community's contexts are accurately defined and communicated as part of the research process.

The high rate of consistency with which social work researchers applied reciprocation, relevance, and contextuality is significant in that the criteria align with many essential elements described in the literature on culturally competent research practice (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). Reciprocation, relevance, and contextuality also align with many principles within co-cultural theory. In regard to these

respective principles, Orbe (1996, 1998c) stressed the importance of researchers understanding the costs and rewards to the participants, understanding participants' preferred outcomes, and acknowledging the participants' field of experiences and situational contexts.

Crucial components of culturally competent research practice include (1) the frequency with which researchers met the criteria of contextuality, relevance, and reciprocation and (2) the significance of these criteria. However, researchers' high usage of these three criteria was primarily limited to the continuous use of a select few subcriteria. For example, researchers consistently included as part of social work journal articles the elements of contextuality, relevance, and reciprocation primarily because those elements frequently occur as part of the traditional manuscript format of journal articles. In other words, a journal article traditionally begins with the researcher providing a literature review that defines the context of the study and describes the participant population involved in the study or article. The literature review is frequently followed by a statement regarding the study's purpose and relevance to the population. Finally, journal articles frequently conclude with a section that addresses the implications of the research and discusses the benefits of the research in relation to the population and social work profession. This manuscript format indicates that whether or not a researcher made a concerted effort to demonstrate cultural competency in the areas of contextuality, relevance, and reciprocation, the mere structure of scholarly writing allows researchers to meet these criteria on a highly consistent basis. Therefore, a closer examination of these three cultural competency criteria using the analysis of the subcriteria and, in conjunction with the qualitative descriptions derived from the textual data, shows stark differences in

the researchers' methods in applying the criteria. The following section will address the cultural competency area of relevance.

Relevance

The criterion of relevance as described by Meleis (1996) and Jacobson et al. (2005) refers to the extent to which research efforts can address the needs and interests of a population as defined by the participants and other community stakeholders. Additionally, researchers that apply the criterion of relevance avoid basing their scholarly inquiry on stereotypes of marginalized populations. The findings of this study show that researchers identified their studies' relevance to the Latino population in 100% of the journal articles. When the competency of relevance is examined using the subcriteria developed for this study, the findings indicate that researchers included the Latino participants, community members, and social workers in defining the relevance of the study in 5.6% of the articles.

The significant difference between the rate at which researchers included their own descriptions of a study's relevance and the rate at which they included additional research stakeholders' descriptions is an area of great disparity and one that requires additional examination as to its cause. The lack of participant and community involvement in defining a study's relevance is particularly concerning when compared against what is commonly discussed within research literature as an essential cultural competency practice. Literature on culturally competent research practice consistently reiterates the importance of the participants and other stakeholders taking an active role in identifying research topics relevant to their needs and the needs of their communities (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Meleis, 1996;

Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009; Thyer, 2001).

The qualitative findings of this study provide further insight into what social work researchers defined as relevant topics to the Latino population. The results show that researchers focused their research efforts on a wide variety of themes, the most prevalent of which included family, health, mental health, women, and adolescents. While each of these themes generally appears to be pertinent to the Latino population, a closer examination of the themes reveals a more precise understanding of the topics that social work researchers addressed. For example, the themes most relevant to social work researchers were that of family and children. Regarding family and children, researchers most frequently addressed the topics of parenting, grandparent caregivers, adoption, and foster care as well as the dynamics of Mexican American families. Whether those themes corresponded with the relevant needs of the Latino populations being studied was difficult to determine given the scope of this study.

In addition to family and children, health was a prevalent theme that researchers identified as being relevant to the Latino population. Regarding health, researchers addressed topics such as hemodialysis, birth outcomes, Latina cancer, and folk healing. Those particular health topics were relevant to researchers and perhaps the funders of the research, and yet without the direct involvement of the participants and community stakeholders, these areas may not have accurately reflected the most relevant health issues facing a particular Latino community. However, based on this study, participant and community relevance was almost entirely absent from the articles, either because researchers did not include participants' and community members' descriptions of the relevant topics or because researchers failed to ask participants what topics were relevant

to their needs. Minimally, researchers could have inquired of the participants how the researcher's preselected topics had relevance to them and their communities. At this time, no firm conclusions can be reached as to the exact reasons that the relevance of the research according to participants and community members was relatively absent from the articles.

When the cultural competency of relevance and its subcriteria are examined from the perspective of co-cultural theory, the findings indicate that researchers maintained significant influence and power during the research process by taking the primary role in defining and communicating the issues that they determined to be most relevant to the Latino communities with which they were performing research efforts. According to co-cultural theory, this type of communication behavior permits researchers to have their voices and perceptions communicated to society through their scholarship while effectively muting the voices, experiences, and perspectives of the cultural group being studied (Orbe, 1996, 1998c). Researchers' decision-making processes for selecting particular topics relevant to the Latino population were not within the scope of this current study; however, Smith (2009) and D'Cruz and Jones (2004) argue that multiple factors influence the selection of research topics in social work—most frequently the needs and demands of influential stakeholders such as policy makers and funding sources.

The findings of this study indicate that the researchers overwhelmingly defined the relevance of their research topics and, therefore, the researchers maintained power and influence over the Latino population's ability to communicate the topics relevant to their needs or interests. An argument could be made that in many cases social work

researchers may not have been entirely culpable for selecting particular topics, as many of the studies were funded by agencies or foundations that had particular interests in certain research topics. Researchers are commonly part of a larger dynamic that holds power and influence over the research topics deemed most relevant to the Latino population. The cultural competency criterion of relevance and its relationship to the dynamics found among academic scholars, policy makers, and funders is an area that could provide greater insight into the selection of topics for Latino populations. Obtaining a greater understanding as to the topics relevant to a particular population can help provide insight into the population's desired benefit from a research study. The following section will address the importance of reciprocation as an essential component of cultural competency.

Reciprocation

Meleis (1996) described the concept of reciprocation as being a critical component of the culturally competent research process in that all parties involved in the research should meet their goals and ultimately benefit from the research process. Jacobson et al. (2005) expanded the definition of participant reciprocation to include tangible incentives such as monetary payments or merchandise. Smith (2009) suggests that social work research should seek to benefit each of the service-users impacted by research efforts. For this study, the cultural competency of reciprocation was measured using three subcriteria in order to gain an increased understanding as to the manner in which primary research stakeholders benefited from participation in studies.

The research stakeholders that most frequently benefited from the study were the researchers and, by proxy, the social work profession. For this study, researcher

reciprocation was defined as the manner in which the social work profession benefited from the study. The findings from this study show that researchers described the benefits of their research to the social work profession in 100% of the articles. According to Meleis (1996), this aspect of reciprocation wherein the researchers achieve their research goals, thereby providing additional knowledge and understanding of marginalized populations to their respective professions, is an important part of culturally competent research, because it assists in the development of services that can better address the needs of vulnerable populations. The high rate of reciprocation reported in the articles appears to show that researchers were aware of and made consistent efforts to identify ways in which their research efforts would benefit the social work profession and ultimately serve to better address the issues facing the Latino population. Although researcher reciprocation is an essential part of the scholarly process, it is most likely that the high rate of researcher reciprocation found within journal articles is due to the format of scholarly writing, in which researchers conclude a journal article by identifying the implications and benefits of the research study as it pertains to the profession. Demonstrating that the research will benefit the social work profession and the population being studied is also critical to funders, policy makers, and academic institutions.

The remaining subcriteria that measured reciprocation focused on the benefits provided to the additional primary research stakeholders, namely the Latino participants and the Latino community. Stakeholder reciprocation for this study was defined in terms of the tangible benefits given to participants and the community. The first subcriterion measured the benefits provided to the Latino participants of the study. Reciprocation to

Latinos was reported in 23.4% of the articles. The qualitative descriptions revealed that Latino participants were provided with many types of reciprocation as part of their participation in the research process. These benefits included monetary incentives, food, gifts, activities, educational courses, and program materials. Reciprocation for community stakeholders was found in 3.2% of the journal articles. Research benefits to the community included training materials, the establishment of community programs, and the use of the research data in local policy making.

The seemingly low rates of reciprocation are most likely due to two contributing factors. One contributing factor may involve the lack of sufficient guidance or training regarding appropriate and effective reciprocation methods that can be implemented when working with specific Latino populations. The literature on culturally competent research provides minimal guidance as to appropriate compensation or reciprocation benefits for Latino research participants. Providing reciprocation to culturally diverse populations is often described within the literature in vague terms such as the need for researchers to observe cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and customs throughout the research process and to provide appropriate compensation according to cultural practices (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Meleis, 1996; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). Thus, researchers are left only with broad conceptual terms as they attempt to apply this cultural competency practice, which may leave many questioning how to effectively incorporate this concept into their research practice. The other contributing factor, which is likely the more influential of the two factors in researchers' inability to provide reciprocation benefits, is the general lack of research funding and resources to provide sufficient benefits to research participants and

stakeholder communities. The inability to provide some form of reciprocation may ultimately influence who participates in the study and for what purpose.

Co-cultural theory provides insight into the reciprocation process that occurs when working with co-cultural populations. Orbe (1998b) states that rewards for the co-cultural participants can include financial gain or tangible benefits as well as the opportunity for increased status or social approval; however, the costs and rewards must factor in the unique standpoint of the co-cultural group and align with its cultural values and practices. Although the definition of reciprocation used within this study focused on whether participants received tangible benefits as rewards for participation, co-cultural theory views reciprocation as more than a transaction of goods. Instead, reciprocation is viewed as a crucial element within the interactional and communicative processes between two cultures, particularly when a power differential exists. According to co-cultural theory, in each instance where an interaction occurs between researchers and participants, the members of the cultural group and their community evaluate the costs and rewards of interacting with those who hold positions of power and privilege in society—in this case social work researchers and scholars. Thus, participants who eventually decide to join a study may do so for reasons other than tangible benefits, being driven to participate based on cultural factors that exist when interacting with persons of authority or status. This concept is essential for researchers to understand, as the costs and rewards may directly influence who decides to participate or what may be motivating participants to join.

Although not specifically addressed by co-cultural theory, the concept of reciprocation closely relates to the concept of *respeto* found within many Latino cultures.

Respeto involves demonstrating respect when interacting with others, particularly in instances where there are differences in age, social position, authority, and culture (Leidy, Guerra, & Toro, 2010; McGoldrick et al., 2005). This form of respect is not only expressively shown by those who do not hold the same status as the other individual involved in the interaction, but it is also expected that professionals or those with authority will show respect for the beliefs and customs of the other individual.

In the studies in which reciprocation was present, there was little evidence that the Latino participants were involved in the process of determining the type or extent of reciprocation they would receive for their participation. A tangible benefit was evident in less than 25% of the studies. With no clear standard or expectation as to what is culturally appropriate reciprocation for Latinos participating in research studies, it is difficult to determine whether the monetary incentives, food, gifts, or other benefits in the studies were appropriate or adequate. Of the researchers who provided benefits to participants, very few of them provided a rationale as to their selection of a particular form of reciprocation for the study, stating only that reciprocation followed what they understood to be customary within Latino culture. In addition to the lack of guidance related to reciprocation, the most likely explanation for the amount of reciprocation found within the articles is the lack of funding and resources available to researchers for providing participants with tangible benefits. Thus, complying with this particular cultural competency criterion appears to be very challenging and is dependent on factors that are not available to researchers or are beyond their control.

Whether the Latino participants and communities involved in the studies found the research interaction to be beneficial in comparison to the cost of their participation

was not directly examined as part of this study. There was some evidence within the qualitative data wherein participants expressed that they benefited from their participation. In one instance, the reciprocation provided to the community came in the form of developing a community program, and, as a result, there was a clear desire expressed by the participants that this particular form of reciprocation continue after the termination of the study. Social work researchers working with Latinos should view reciprocation as more than tangible benefits to participants. Reciprocation forms a significant portion of the communication process in which the researcher demonstrates respect toward the participants' culture and values the time and efforts of the participants (Orbe, 1998c). The lack of reciprocation or sufficient reward provided to research participants may have a lasting impact a population's desire and willingness to participate and collaborate with scholars, as the population may view the research as benefiting only those in more dominant social positions (Orbe, 1998c). Understanding the needs and desires of a population involves gaining greater insight into the population's socioeconomic, political, and historical context. The following section will address the importance of participant contextuality as an element of cultural competency.

Contextuality

Meleis (1996) described the criterion of contextuality as an essential element of culturally competent research, as it involves accounting for and considering the uniqueness of the participants' current socioeconomic and historical contexts throughout the research process in order to avoid any further marginalization or stereotyping of the population and culture. Contextuality also provides significant insight and understanding during the interpretation and discussion of research findings as well as in the implications

of the results. The criterion of contextuality was one of the most frequently found criteria within the journal articles included in this study. Contextuality was measured using four subcriteria in order to understand the method by which researchers established the contexts of their studies. Two of the subcriteria focused on contextuality being provided either by direct participants or by community members, while the other two subcriteria focused on the use of outside sources by the researcher to establish context.

The research stakeholder that most frequently defined the context of the study was the researcher. The manner in which the researcher defined the context of a study was divided into two criteria: the first included the use of general contextual information about the Latino population, such as national statistics and literature about Latino populations, while the second criterion focused on the researcher's use of local contextual information that described the participants' community or specific circumstances. These two contextuality subcriteria were developed for this study to clarify the extent to which researchers defined the context of Latino participants from macro and mezzo perspectives. Overall, researchers applied contextuality in 99.2% of journal articles. When contextuality was discussed in terms of researchers' use of general and/or local contextual information, researchers defined the context of Latino participants using general contextual information about Latino populations in 98.4% of the articles. The high percentage at which researchers applied general contextual information is likely due to the accessibility of national statistics and broad information about Latino culture and populations. This form of contextuality can often be gathered efficiently and effectively by electronic means or through the researcher's academic institution and with a limited amount of resources and assistance. The qualitative findings from this study show that the

most frequently used contextual categories included descriptions of Latino population trends, socioeconomic issues, health-related issues, Latina women's issues, and Latino immigrants. These contextual categories appear to have strong validity in defining the context of a study's participants, although given the heterogeneous nature of the Latino population with regard to country of origin, citizenship status, generational status, and other cultural differences, researchers should be strongly cautioned in applying broad contextual descriptions to research participants. This is especially pertinent given that a researcher's conceptualization and description of participants' context may not accurately depict the participants' environment or participant characteristics, which may ultimately perpetuate misinformation or mischaracterizations of the Latino populations that exist in the United States (Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1998c; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

In comparison to the frequent use of general contextual information, researchers described participants' local contexts in only 41.9% of journal articles. The dramatically lower rate in which researchers cited participants' local contextual information is likely due to several factors such as time, resources, labor, confidentiality, and the type of research being performed. Gathering local contextual information about participants' communities requires increased time, labor, and resources on the part of researchers in order to obtain information about the local community that may not be readily accessible through electronic means. Obtaining local information would likely involve additional time to perform exhaustive searches of participants' local contexts and may require researchers to contact local government entities or community agencies to obtain pertinent contextual information.

Another reason for not including local contextual information about participants

or their communities stems from concerns over privacy and confidentiality. The qualitative data found that several researchers expressed specific concern over the ability to adequately maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants due to the relative size of a particular community and the identifying characteristics of the community participants, and therefore did not include local contextual information. Lastly, the type of research study may have intentionally targeted the Latino population broadly, and therefore local contextual information would have detracted from the purpose of the study.

The relatively frequent use of general and local contextuality by researchers stands in stark contrast to the findings of the remaining two subcriteria, which measured the frequency at which researchers obtained contextual descriptions from direct participants and from community stakeholders. The findings reveal that researchers included or obtained contextual information from Latino participants in 2.4% of the journal articles and from community stakeholders in only approximately 1% of the articles. Evidence of participant contextual information was limited to three articles, all of which were experiential studies wherein the researchers described aspects of an individual therapy interaction with a participant. During the therapeutic interaction, the researcher allowed the client to describe his or her personal background and current situation. An experiential article based on a therapeutic client interaction would likely include such details about the participant's description of his or her context, and therefore the occurrence of this cultural competency criterion is likely to be expected; nevertheless, the finding does demonstrate that the researcher found the client's context to be an important part of the scholarly inquiry.

The one instance of community contextuality among the journal articles was limited to the involvement of a community focus group carried out by the researcher in order to gain a better understanding of the beliefs and behaviors of Latinos in the community related to health care and family planning.

The significant lack of participant and community involvement in defining the context of research is likely due to several factors that include limited resources and personnel to perform interviews or focus groups with participants, as well as a research project's time constraints. Gathering contextual information from direct participants would require additional planning and time spent coordinating efforts to meet with participants and community members. Additionally, the process would require the researcher to then compile and incorporate the participants' responses into the research design and process. Research that actively incorporates participants and other stakeholders can create numerous complexities in the research design and methodology and can be limited by the scope of the research goals and available resources (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Smith, 2009).

The literature on culturally competent research frequently addresses the concept of participant contextuality. Taking into consideration and including the participants' cultural, socioeconomic, and historical perspectives about their context is an integral part of performing research in a culturally competent manner (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Stanhope et al., 2005; Thyer, 2001). If the lived experiences and context of Latino populations are primarily defined by researchers, the result may lead to the perpetuation of existing generalizations and perhaps the mischaracterization of the realities faced by these populations (Grinnell &

Unrau, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Thyer, 2001).

This sentiment is further reiterated in co-cultural theory wherein the contextual standpoint as described by the direct participants themselves is a crucial part of validating the co-cultural nature and unique existence of the population (Orbe, 1996, 1998c). The integration of the participants' situational context and field of experience can provide valuable and critical information about the specific contextual factors that influenced their cultural upbringing or events that defined their community and have affected the manner in which the community communicates with persons of privilege or social status (Orbe, 1998c). Gaining an accurate understanding of the participants' context gives the researcher the ability to examine how the participants' experiences may have influenced the research outcomes and provides additional insight when discussing the limitations and implications of the study results (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Historically, the failure to consider participants' cultural contexts eventually resulted in changes to research ethical standards, particularly when performing research with minority and oppressed populations (Aisenberg, 2008; Jani et al., 2009; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Stanhope et al., 2005; Thyer, 2001). If researchers fail to include participants' descriptions of their contexts, the research could potentially mischaracterize the population, reinforce stereotypes, and produce outcomes and interventions that may not adequately or effectively address the issues facing the population (Aisenberg, 2008; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Meleis, 1996; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Thyer, 2001).

According to co-cultural theory, if the contextuality and experiences of marginalized populations such as the Latino population are primarily being defined and communicated by researchers, these researchers are in fact perpetuating the dominant

communication structure. When those within the dominant communication structure—in this case researchers—are primarily responsible for interpreting and communicating the context of a minority population using descriptions and terminology not of the population, this process effectively mutes the voices and perspectives of the minority population and can serve to reinforce stereotypes (Orbe, 1998c). Ensuring that participant contextuality is actively considered as part of the social work research process is an important concept that aligns with the person-in-environment framework that serves as one of social work's primary hallmarks when working with culturally diverse individuals and communities (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014). Using participants' preferred communication methods is essential in gaining accurate descriptions and understanding of their lived experiences. The following section will address communication as an essential component of cultural competency.

Communication

The role of communication in culturally competent research is described by Meleis (1996) as the researcher's ability to use methods of communication that are preferred by and sensitive to the needs of the participants in order to effectively understand the group's views and lived experiences. Similarly, co-cultural theory stresses the importance of addressing the inequality and power differential that exists between researchers and co-cultural participants by ensuring that researchers provide effective accommodations that allow marginalized groups to have their voices and experiences heard and understood in a manner that is defined by the participants themselves.

Three subcriteria were used to measure the extent to which researchers sought to address communication barriers with Latino participants. The first criterion evaluated

whether participants were given verbal communication options. The second criterion assessed whether research materials accounted for the language needs and cultural considerations of the participants. The third criterion measured whether researchers were bilingual or involved bilingual staff in order to accommodate the possible need for communication in a language other than English.

The findings of this study show that researchers demonstrated the competency of communication in 54% of the articles. In 47.6% of articles, there was evidence that the researcher and/or individuals on the research team, including community members, were bilingual. Although a large amount of articles mentioned the use of bilingual individuals, very few researchers addressed the degree of language fluency spoken by bilingual individuals. Language fluency becomes critical to accurately communicating with a group in a proficient and effective manner. Communication should be based on participants' preferences so that researchers may fully understand the message in a manner that accurately reflects what participants stated, with minimal interpretive interference. Similarly, culturally competent communication also extends to the proper selection of qualified translators and interpreters. To this point, Grinnell and Unrau (2014) warn that data gathered through interpreters and translators can influence and bias research outcomes due to the subjective usage of language, which includes cultural nuances and differences in dialect and vocabulary used by the interpreters or translators.

In 27% of studies, Latino participants were offered spoken communication options in English or Spanish. The moderate rates at which researchers involved bilingual staff as part of the research effort and the degree to which they offered spoken language options may be influenced by factors such as lack of qualified bilingual individuals, as

well as the scope of the research project and the type of scholarship not involving participant interaction. For example, spoken language accommodations may not have been necessary in instances where researchers restricted the study to English-speaking participants or in scholarly articles that did not involve direct communication with participants, such as in literature reviews or secondary data analyses.

In addition to spoken language accommodations for Latino participants, researchers must also be cognizant of written communication in their selection of measurement instruments, questionnaires, research documents, and program materials (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Thyer, 2001). Findings from this study show that in 36.3% of articles, researchers used written materials in both English and Spanish or offered communication accommodations to help participants understand the written research materials. Written materials included measurement tools, consent forms, research information, and course curriculum materials. This area of cultural competency can be particularly challenging for researchers given the limited number of standardized measurement tools available in Spanish and the difficulty in determining whether the tool is appropriate for use with the specific Latino population being studied (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Also, translating materials can become an extensive process in order to ensure that the written material is culturally sensitive, valid, and reliable (Casado et al., 2012). For these reasons, using culturally competent research materials is a complexity that likely contributes to the lack of written materials in Spanish and contributes to the use of research methods and resources that lack sufficient rigor and testing (Casado et al., 2012). Another possible reason that written communication is not frequently used is that some participants may not be able to read

and sufficiently understand the written material. Co-cultural theory emphasizes the importance of performing research that accounts for the abilities of the participants; therefore, if written communication poses a significant difficulty to participants, researchers should make appropriate accommodations so that participants are able to understand and communicate effectively (Orbe, 1998c).

Communication is the essence of co-cultural theory and is an essential element of culturally competent research; it allows participants to express their voices and lived experiences naturally rather than adapting to the dominant communication structure of the researcher, which can effectively stifle the group's ability to be heard and understood accurately (Casado et al., 2012; Orbe, 1998b). Researchers should not only seek to encourage effective communication with direct participants during the active phases of a research study but also seek to involve direct participants and community members as part of the interpretation of the research outcomes. Allowing participants the opportunity to openly discuss the meaning and application of research findings will ultimately serve to increase the validity of research outcomes while simultaneously empowering participants (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Orbe, 1998c; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Thyer, 2001). Creating a relationship and atmosphere in which open communication can occur is frequently based on the type of relationship that is established by the researcher. A relationship of trust and mutual respect is a necessary component of cultural competency and will be discussed in the following section on disclosure.

Disclosure

In order for researchers to effectively gain access to cultural groups, they must make concerted efforts to build trust and establish rapport with cultural groups as a means of encouraging disclosure of the group's lived experiences (Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1998c). In an effort to develop a unique cultural identity within a dominant cultural structure, marginalized populations will frequently establish distinct forms of communication and interactional behaviors among themselves that involve cultural secrecy and that are often not fully understood by those of the dominant culture (Jacobson et al., 2005; Meleis, 1996; Orbe, 1998c). Encouraging cultural groups to disclose the unique and possibly unspoken aspects of their culture is a process that requires a concerted effort on the part of researchers to build relationships of trust with participants. This study examined journal articles for elements of disclosure in which researchers made efforts to foster relationships of trust with the study participants. Disclosure was measured using three subcriteria. The first criterion measured the methods used by researchers to build trust with participants. The second assessed whether informed consent was obtained or discussed with participants. The third measured whether researchers identified concerns or hesitancies expressed by research participants.

Overall, 51.6% of the studies show that researchers applied the concept of disclosure. In 43.5% of articles, researchers made efforts to build trust with participants by using such methods as utilizing familiar settings in which to perform research, having bicultural staff as part of the research team, prolonging their engagement with participants, using culturally appropriate communication, and reassuring participants about a study's purpose and privacy safeguards. Researchers that applied these

approaches frequently identified that they did so with the intention of building trust and demonstrating cultural awareness during the research process. Many of the researchers who actively implemented these types of trust-building efforts stated that the efforts had a positive impact on the level of trust and improved study participation rates.

Within the framework of co-cultural theory, researchers should be keenly aware of the risks faced by vulnerable populations when interacting with individuals in positions of power and status (Orbe, 1998c). This concept refers to the process in which a cultural group evaluates the costs and rewards associated with interaction and whether the preferred outcome will ultimately serve to benefit their lives despite the potential risks. As participants disclose intimate aspects of their culture or openly discuss their viewpoints, they increase the risk that those of the dominant culture will misunderstand their perceptions and that some form of retribution may come as a result (Meleis, 1996). Building relationships of trust and ensuring confidentiality is particularly important when working with the undocumented segment of the Latino population, due to legitimate concerns related to their immigration status and the impact that their interactions with the dominant culture may have upon their well-being. From a co-cultural perspective, a lack of trust in the researcher may result in an individual electing not to participate in a study or to drop out from a study prematurely due to the perceived risks involved (Orbe, 1998c).

Trust in the researcher also closely relates to the co-cultural concept of preferred outcome in that participants may give responses or communicate with researchers according to the expectations of the dominant group in order to show assimilation (Orbe, 1998b). If participants interact and communicate in a manner that is meant to conform to

the needs of the researcher and show assimilation rather than accommodation, in which individuals are comfortable expressing their cultural perceptions and lived experiences, this can raise legitimate questions and concerns over the validity of a study's findings (Orbe, 1998b).

Disclosure is closely tied to the cultural value of *respeto* often observed within Latino populations, which involves demonstrating respect and valuing others based on age or social position, including parents, elders, teachers, professionals, and authority figures (Gaitan, 2004; Leidy et al. 2010;). As *respeto* is fostered and expressed by professionals and authority figures, Latino individuals reciprocate with trust and respect. This trust and respect can encourage participants to express their experiences and perceptions openly and can also provide assurance that the interactions will remain private (Meleis, 1996). Failure by professionals to show respect and develop trust often keeps many Latinos from speaking up for their rights or disagreeing with the decisions or opinions of those professionals (Leidy et al., 2010; McGoldrick et al., 2005). Therefore, social work researchers should view establishing trust and respect as an integral part of cultural competency when performing research with Latino populations.

That fact that disclosure was found in only 43% of the articles was likely influenced by several factors. One such factor may include the type of research performed. For example, disclosure may not be considered a pertinent or applicable concept by researchers whose scholarly articles are literature reviews or whose research is based on secondary data sets. Another possible explanation for the lack of disclosure may include the fact that researchers are not accustomed to including their efforts to foster disclosure as part of their scholarly writing. Lastly, some researchers view the

process of building trust with direct participants as directly affecting their research objectivity and, as a result, jeopardizing the validity of research findings due to the influence that their relationship had upon the participants (Smith, 2009).

Of the articles included in this study, only 28.2% mentioned that informed consent was obtained from and/or discussed with participants. The qualitative data showed that researchers used several methods to obtain consent. In many instances, participants gave written and signed consent, while in other studies researchers noted that informed consent was explained and agreed upon verbally. In at least two instances, passive parental consent was used when studying schoolchildren.

Obtaining informed consent from participants is an essential component of disclosure, as the researcher has the ethical responsibility to discuss the benefits and potential risks associated with participation in the research project. From a historical standpoint, the informed consent process is critical when working with marginalized or vulnerable populations (Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006). The informed consent process allows participants the opportunity to evaluate the costs and benefits of participation as well as provides an occasion for researchers to build trust with participants by reassuring them of the privacy safeguards in place to keep their identities and responses confidential. The low rate at which researchers included evidence in their scholarly writing that informed consent was obtained or discussed with participants is somewhat concerning given that approximately 75% of the journal articles involved direct participants. Whether researchers merely neglected to include a statement regarding informed consent or whether the process of informed consent is assumed to be an inherent part of the research process is beyond the

scope of this study. The inclusion of a statement by the researcher regarding the efforts to obtain informed consent demonstrates an increased level of cultural awareness and cultural competency on the part of that researcher as the consent process acknowledges that culturally diverse populations face a variety of risks associated with participation in research studies.

The final subcriteria of disclosure evaluated whether researchers identified instances in which participants expressed concerns or showed signs of hesitancy during the research process. The findings from this study show that 6.5% of articles mentioned some form of hesitancy from participants during the research process. Examples of the concerns or hesitancies expressed by participants included issues related to the informed consent process, fear of the possible stigma involved in being a research participant, comfort level with the research interaction and the study topic, and concerns related to undocumented status.

There are several reasons that documenting participants' concerns and hesitancies is relevant to culturally competent research. First, a researcher's awareness of participant concerns or hesitancies regarding participation in a study allows the researcher to make active efforts to address participants' concerns that may otherwise go unnoticed or unaddressed. Second, observations about participant hesitancies provide valuable insight into the research methods used to build trust and gain access to the population. Third, awareness of participant concerns or hesitancies can also provide researchers with additional insight into participants' responses to the research topics and the possible impact that research interactions may have had upon participants' responses. Researchers' observations of participant concerns or hesitancies should be addressed

during the interpretation and discussion of research outcomes in order to consider whether trust or privacy issues appeared to impact participant responses. Lastly, as researchers record these types of observations in scholarly writing, future research efforts can effectively address similar concerns or hesitancies that may arise, and efforts may be made to adapt the research design and methods to better facilitate the development of trust with the participant population. The cultural competency of disclosure is closely related to the researcher's awareness of his or her own identity as a researcher and the power differential that exists between participants and researchers. The following section will address the competency of identity and power differential.

Identity and Power

Literature on culturally competent research frequently refers to the importance of the researcher being aware of his or her identity as a researcher and of the power differential that exists between researcher and participant (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Orbe, 1998c; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). Both Meleis (1996) and Orbe (1998c) state that the power differential between researchers and participants creates a hierarchical structure that influences the amount and type of interaction that takes place during the research process. Also prominently found within the research literature is the need for researchers to be cognizant of their personal biases and the impact that these biases may have upon the research process and research outcomes (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Orbe, 1998c; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). This study used three subcriteria to measure aspects of identity and power differential within scholarly articles. Two subcriteria measured whether

researchers actively involved participants and community members in portions of the development, design, and interpretation of results. The third subcriteria examined whether researchers described the potential impact of their personal identities or biases on the research process and whether they attempted to address these factors.

Overall, 28% of articles included descriptions that the researcher applied one or more of the subcriteria to address the competency of identity and power during the research process. The study results show that researchers actively involved community members in the research process for 18.5% of articles and direct participants for 8.9% of articles. In the studies for which community members and direct participants were involved in the research process, researchers applied this competency in a variety of ways. For example, in several articles community members and participants provided direct input as to the purpose and design of the research as a way to ensure that the research would benefit the community. In other studies, community members and participants helped to verify the accuracy of the outcomes and assisted in the interpretation of the study's results. Community members and participants also assisted in the development and design of research materials and program information.

The literature on culturally competent research is replete with calls for researchers to actively involve participants throughout the research process as a means of empowering culturally diverse and vulnerable populations to have their voices heard and to have the opportunity to take an active role in bringing about social change (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). The complexities involved in the design and implementation of research that actively incorporates community members and

participants are numerous and can require significant planning, resources, and time in order to carry out this type of research endeavor effectively (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Smith, 2009). For that reason, it is likely that many researchers either avoided or significantly limited the amount of direct participant and community involvement during the research process.

Social change and client empowerment are core elements of social work and should influence the design and manner of social work research, and yet many social work researchers conform to the traditional process of scientific inquiry found within the academy (Smith, 2009). According to Meleis (1996), researchers should make active efforts to establish a more horizontal relationship with participants by involving them throughout the research process as a way of promoting a "shared authority and shared ownership of the data" (p. 13). In a similar manner, co-cultural theory emphasizes the need for researchers to address the inequality and power differential that exist by engaging the cultural group members as co-researchers, thereby allowing their voices to become an integral part of the scholarly inquiry process (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Orbe, 1998c). Ultimately, the researcher should ensure that the participants' and community's best interests are being served in addition to the interests of the researcher (Aisenberg, 2008; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

In 11.3% of articles, there was evidence of a researcher's recognition of his or her identity and the influence this identity may have upon the research process. Researchers applied this competency in several different ways. In several articles, researchers described the impact of establishing personal relationships with participants, while in

other instances researchers reflected on the influence that personal biases and perceptions might have upon the research interaction or interpretation of the results. Another example included a researcher's acknowledgement of the cultural differences that existed between the research team and the participants. Because of the researcher's cultural awareness, the researcher identified the potential impact that the cultural differences may have had on the research team's interactions with the participants.

A critical aspect of culturally competent research involves the ability of the researcher and research staff to be aware of their personal biases and attitudes while actively considering how their individual influences may impact the entire research process from the initial stages of the research to the interpretation of the study results (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009). From a cultural competency perspective, research findings should be interpreted and analyzed in a culturally sensitive manner (i.e., be strengths focused, consider cultural and socioeconomic context, and acknowledge limitations), and participants should be actively involved in the interpretation and distribution of results (Aisenberg, 2008; Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Saltus, 2006).

An essential part of co-cultural theory is researchers' active recognition that their status and privilege place them in positions in which they ultimately have control over the interpretation and communication of the participants' voices within scholarly works. Because of this power and privilege, researchers must make active efforts to maintain participants' voices and ensure the accuracy of participants' lived experiences, with minimal interference from researchers' inherent communication patterns and biases.

Reducing the amount of researcher bias and influence upon study results helps to avoid the mischaracterization and perpetuation of cultural stereotypes of marginalized groups that can occur as a result of publishing research that does not accurately reflect the experiences and culture of the minority population (Orbe, 1998c; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Failure on the part of the researcher to identify personal biases is likely due to the perceived negative impact of other scholars and professionals having insight into that researcher's biases as well as the perceived negative impact upon the validity of the study's findings. Closely related to the criterion of identity and power is the competency of empowerment, in which knowledge transfer and learning take place as a result of participation in a research study. The following section will discuss the role of empowerment in the research process.

Empowerment

Empowerment as a component of culturally competent research is described by Meleis (1996) and Jacobson et al. (2005) as providing a research experience in which the direct participants and community members gain additional knowledge and skills that empower them to take adaptive action to improve their lives and bring about social change in their communities. Empowerment also extends to the researcher in the form of increased awareness and willingness to identify ways in which the research process could have been modified or improved to better adapt to the needs of the cultural group, thereby providing valuable feedback for future research efforts.

The cultural competency of empowerment is found within the primary mission of social work, and it forms the foundation of several of social work's core values. The preamble of the NASW *Code of Ethics* (2008) states that the primary mission of social

work is “to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (p. 1). Within the co-cultural theoretical framework, researchers are responsible for empowering members of the cultural group to become actively engaged in the research in such a way that the participants achieve their preferred outcomes and benefit from having participated in the research experience (Cohen & Avanzino, 2010; Loehwing & Motter, 2012; Orbe, 1998c).

For this study, empowerment was measured using three subcriteria to examine the knowledge or skills that the participants, the community members, and the researcher acquired as a result of the research effort. Of the 32 (25.8%) articles that applied empowerment, 21 (16.9%) articles cited that the researcher identified ways to improve the current research process to better address the cultural factors that were present during the research. The themes related to researcher empowerment included such themes as reflecting on the research methods that were used, acknowledging challenges during the research process, and understanding specific cultural factors.

A possible explanation for the low rate of researcher empowerment is likely due to the type of research article being reviewed. The research articles such as literature reviews and secondary data analyses frequently did not include statements by researchers that identified ways in which they could improve their scholarship efforts to better address cultural factors or improve future research efforts to be more culturally responsive to the Latino population. The other possible contributor to the low rate of researcher empowerment may include the nature of the limitation and implication sections of scholarly writing. In the articles reviewed in this study, researchers were

frequently able to identify the general limitations of their studies, and yet the limitations were frequently related to issues of generalizability and sample size, with very few instances in which the researcher evaluated the cultural competency of the research process. Many researchers may prefer not to acknowledge openly that the research effort could have incorporated methods that were more culturally responsive to participant needs. Such an acknowledgement leaves researchers vulnerable to possible questions regarding the study's overall validity as well as to potential scholarly critiques about the degree of cultural competency used during the research process.

Sixteen (12.9 %) articles cited evidence of participant empowerment in which participants gained a particular skill or knowledge as a result of the research process. The qualitative analysis showed that participants gained knowledge and skills in the following areas: mental health information, parenting skills, health education, behavioral improvements, academic achievement, social support, substance abuse education, domestic violence, personal finances, political empowerment, gang education, and community resource information. Only two (1.6%) articles featured the rate at which researchers provided empowerment opportunities for community members. These community empowerment examples came in the form of leadership training opportunities and developing active partnerships within the community. The low rate at which empowerment was found within the studies may be attributed to the type of research performed, such as literature reviews and secondary data analyses. Also contributing to the low rate of empowerment findings were studies in which the primary objective and design of the research were limited to gathering information about the cultural group through questionnaires and measurement tools, without the intent to provide participants

with additional information or instruction on a particular skill. The most likely reasons for the lack of participant and community empowerment are the complexities that arise within research design and methodology as researchers incorporate the concepts of social change and empowerment into the research process. This aspect of cultural competency also requires increased time, resources, and labor, all of which are frequent limitations experienced by social work researchers.

When the rates of empowerment are framed within co-cultural theory, it is revealed that researchers provided relatively few instances in which study participants were provided with experiences that empowered them to accomplish their preferred outcomes as a means of improving their lives and helping to address the challenges facing their community. On the contrary, the failure to empower participants and the community may further reinforce the idea that researchers view cultural groups as commodities to be used by those with privilege and power in order to accomplish their own preferred outcomes with minimal if any long-term investment in improving the situation of the participants' community. Smith (2009) recommends that social work should perform committed research in which the objective of the study is social change and empowerment. The 12% rate of participant empowerment and the approximately 2% of community empowerment found in this study support Smith's (2009) call to social work researchers to increase their efforts to design and carry out research that increasingly aligns with social work's values and mission to bring about social change and empower individuals and communities. These findings related to participant and community empowerment serve as a stern critique of the purpose and objectives of the research being performed by social work researchers. The following section will discuss

the cultural competency concept of time and the impact that it has upon the research process.

Time

The concept of time is the cultural competency criterion found to have the lowest application by researchers. Meleis (1996) and Jacobson et al. (2005) identify time as a cultural competency in which the researcher demonstrates an awareness that the participants' perception and use of time may be different from that of the researcher's, and therefore accommodations should be made to the research process in order to be sensitive to the needs of the participants. Meleis (1996) further states that researchers risk jeopardizing the participants' trust, empowerment, and disclosure by limiting the number and extent of participant encounters in order to satisfy the researcher's agenda, which is frequently based on his or her own cultural understanding that time is limited and that projects must follow fixed time constraints and abide by strict timelines. From a co-cultural perspective, accommodating participants' time is a cultural element related to participants' field of experience in which cultural groups often adapt and conform to the expectations and cultural norms of the dominant group (Orbe, 1998c; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Researchers have the responsibility to demonstrate cultural sensitivity about participants' perception and use of time; otherwise, participants will likely conform to the time constraints and limited interactions that frequently form the cultural perception of time used by researchers.

The cultural competency of time was measured in this study using three subcriteria that examined the impact of time on direct participants as well as on the entire research process. Of the 23 (18.5%) articles that applied the criterion of time, 17 (13.7%)

articles cited that time accommodations were made in order to meet the needs of the direct participants, and nine (7.3%) articles mentioned the impact of time on the participants' lives. Researchers made time accommodations for participants in the following ways: holding meetings on evenings or weekends, arranging a convenient date and time based on participant preference, limiting the number of meetings, performing research during the summer months, and selecting a convenient research setting. Time primarily affected participants in areas related to transportation issues or to responsibilities for which they were needed at home. Lastly, eight (6.5%) articles cited the impact of time on the overall research process. The impact of time on the research process included themes such as time constraint challenges and the need for additional time to perform the research. The challenges and constraints came in the form of working-hour conflicts, interruptions in the home environment, and restricted interview opportunities set by the researcher's IRB. Researchers also mentioned the importance of extending the time to interview participants in order to prolong the engagement with the participants as a means of establishing increased rapport and demonstrating respect for participants' cultural norms.

The low rate at which researchers applied the competency of time was likely due to the types of articles reviewed, such as literature reviews, secondary data analyses, and other articles that did not involve direct participants. Other contributing factors may have included limited resources available to researchers that would allow them to spend additional time with and fully accommodate the needs of the participants. Additionally, researchers may be limited by strict timelines based on the demands of funding sources.

As researchers make active attempts to understand the participants' perceptions of

time and make accommodations to meet the needs of the participants, the hierarchical structure of the relationship becomes increasingly horizontal. As the researcher takes additional time to become familiar with participants and value their time, the amount of trust in the researcher increases and can ultimately translate into a greater willingness to participate in the research and enhance the manner in which participants communicate research (Meleis, 1996). As evidence of this principle, several researchers within the journal articles expressed that the increased time spent with participants directly resulted in an increased level of participation in the research and a greater willingness among participants to openly share their lived experiences. The fact that this cultural competency criterion had the lowest frequency among all the criteria appears to show that researchers did not commonly associate participants' concepts or perceptions of time and the impact of the research study on participants' time as relevant components of culturally competent research practice.

Characteristics of the Highest Criteria Articles

The number of cultural competency criteria found within a journal article and what that number represents could be discussed in several ways. One way to discuss the cultural competency of an article is in terms of the total number of the eight cultural competency criteria achieved. The eight cultural competency criteria represented the broad areas of culturally competent research practice. An article in which all eight criteria were found could be described as one in which the researcher applied at least one research practice that met the criteria within each of the eight criterion categories. The study results show that eight (6.5%) of the 124 total articles achieved all eight criteria. Researchers who addressed all eight cultural competency criteria should be commended

for having done so; however, that amount should be considered within the context that each of the eight criteria comprises several subcriteria.

Thus, another way to discuss the cultural competency criteria found within a journal article is in terms of the number of subcriteria achieved by researchers. The amount of subcriteria found within an article provided a clearer description of the specific research practices that were applied by researchers within each of the eight cultural competency areas. The total number of subcriteria that could be achieved by a researcher within an article was 26. The study results show that the highest number of subcriteria achieved among all the articles reviewed in this study was 15. Four (3.2%) of the 124 articles achieved 15 subcriteria.

Perhaps the most effective way to discuss the cultural competency elements of a journal article is by considering the amounts of both the eight cultural competency criteria as well the subcriteria. The distinction between the eight criteria categories and their subcriteria is significant because they represent distinct achievements with regard to culturally competent research practice. For example, an article could have met all eight cultural competency criteria, which would indicate that evidence of each cultural competency area was found within the article, and yet in light of the subcriteria within the category, the research may have met only the minimum requirements of one subcriterion. Yet in another example, an article may have achieved eight subcriteria, and yet that amount may have been concentrated within three or four of the eight cultural competency categories, thus indicating that the researcher did not describe having applied cultural competency practices in the remaining categories.

Three articles (3.2%) achieved all eight of the cultural competency criteria

categories and also achieved 15 of the subcriteria, which was the highest amount found within the study sample. A discussion regarding the similarities and differences among each of these articles is relevant in gaining a clear understanding of what research practices were applied by the researchers to be among those that achieved the highest numbers of cultural competency criteria. Although the researchers of all three articles achieved all eight cultural competency criteria and met 15 subcriteria, all of them achieved their numbers using slightly different research practices. For example, in the article "Cultural competence in a group intervention designed for Latino patients living with HIV/AIDS," Acevedo (2008) met the cultural competency criteria within several areas by describing the use of research practices that addressed many cultural factors relevant to the direct participants of the study. These practices included providing the preferred communication of the participants, involving the participants in the research process, recognizing the participants' potential trust issues, providing a form of compensation to participants, and empowering the participants with knowledge or skills about the study topic. The remaining criteria primarily centered on the researcher's own efforts to identify the context of the study, recognize identity and power issues, communicate effectively, establish trust with participants, and recognize methods to improve the research effort. The article by Acevedo (2008) could be used by other social work researchers to gather ideas as to methods that could be used to involve Latino participants during the research process and ways in which researchers could address many other cultural competency areas during the research process.

In contrast to Acevedo (2008), Ridings et al. (2011) applied cultural competency research practices that primarily centered on involving community members throughout

the research process. Their article "Building a Latino youth program: Using concept mapping to identify community based strategies for success," describes how community members were involved in the early stages of the research process as a means of helping to identify the needs of the community and to establish the relevance of the research topic from a community perspective. The community members continued to be involved throughout the entire research process as a means of providing consistent feedback to the researchers regarding the research efforts. In the end, the combined efforts of both the researchers and the community resulted in the development and continuation of a youth program within the community. The Ridings et al. (2011) article could serve as an example to social work researchers seeking to involve and empower Latino community members through participation in social work research.

The final article, "Maternal support and cultural influences among Mexican immigrant mothers" (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995), achieved a high number of criteria and subcriteria by applying elements of cultural competency practices with both direct participants and community members. The researchers provided accommodations to meet the direct participants' communication needs and time constraints, and also ensured that the participants were compensated for their participation. The researchers also involved community members as part of the research effort to establish trust within the community and in their relationships with the direct participants.

Each of the articles described in this section could serve as valuable examples of how researchers demonstrated and described research practices with Latino populations that were consistent with the cultural competency criteria. Such research practices could then be similarly applied by social work researchers in future research efforts with Latino

groups. However, caution must be taken to avoid equating the number of cultural competency criteria and subcriteria with the effectiveness or significance of the research. Therefore, researchers should use criteria amounts as a means of assessing what cultural competency areas were addressed within a journal article and what cultural competency practices were applied by the researchers within each criteria category.

The Use of Cultural Competency Criteria from 1990 to 2012

An important aspect of this study was to analyze whether there were significant changes in the amount of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles from 1990 to 2012. This analysis was particularly important given that nearly 20 years have passed since NASW incorporated cultural competency as part of the ethical mandate for social work professionals and since the 1996 publication of the cultural competency criteria by Meleis. Nearly five years later, NASW sought to further expand upon its ethical mandate for professional social workers to practice in a culturally competent manner by publishing additional cultural competency standards in 2001 and subsequently publishing cultural competency standard indicators in 2007. The changes to the ethical standards as well as the development of cultural competency standards and practice indicators were each designed to increase social workers' awareness and application of cultural competency practices in order to effectively meet the growing needs of culturally diverse groups, such as the ever-increasing Latino population in the United States (Anderson & Carter, 2003; Asamoah, 1996; Chang-Muy & Congress, 2009; Estrada et al., 2002; Lum, 2004; NASW, 2001, 2008; D. Sue, 2006; Thyer et al., 2010). Given the ethical mandate and the numerous efforts over the years to enhance social work professionals' use of culturally competent practices, the amount of cultural

competency criteria found within social work journal articles examining Latino populations in the United States would have likely reflected those efforts.

The results of this study found that there were no significant differences over time in the number of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles that examined Latino populations in the United States. The lack of change in the number of cultural competency practices found within social work journals over the past 20 years is a legitimate concern, given the repeated calls for social work professionals to practice in a culturally competent manner. One possibility for the insignificant change in the amount of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles may be that social work researchers have not been accustomed to including descriptions of these cultural competency practices within their scholarly writings, and therefore the amounts found in the articles would naturally have remained relatively unchanged. This particular explanation would be the most optimistic of the possible reasons for the insignificant changes that have taken place over time.

Another possible explanation for the lack of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles over time is the likelihood that social work researchers have not been directly exposed to the cultural competency criteria developed by nursing scholar Meleis (1996), which would have limited social work researchers' ability to meet the specific cultural criteria. Nevertheless, the 1996 ethical mandate by NASW for social workers to incorporate cultural competency into professional practice, along with the subsequent publications of the cultural competency standards and practice indicators in 2001 and 2007, would have easily encompassed the concepts and practices included in the cultural competency criteria that were used as the assessment framework for this

current study. In fact, social work scholars Casado et al. (2012) state that the cultural competency criteria of Meleis (1996) align with the mission, values, and competencies of the social work profession. Therefore, for purposes of this study, it is unlikely that unfamiliarity with Meleis (1996) would have made any significant difference in the lack of cultural competency practices applied by social work researchers over time, given the frequent efforts made by NASW to reiterate the need for social work professionals to practice in a culturally competent manner.

Another possible explanation for the lack of change in the number of cultural competency practices applied by social work researchers is that the mandate to acquire cultural competency knowledge and practice skills has received little emphasis over the past two decades within social work research. This mandate is still considered a "relatively recent development" (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p. 98), while the concept of culturally competent practice has been heavily emphasized over the past several decades as part of CSWE educational standards for MSW and BSW students and for continuing education among social work direct practitioners (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Castex, 1994; Furman et al., 2009; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Walker & Staton, 2000). Although a direct comparison between the cultural competency of social work direct practitioners and social work researchers is beyond the scope of this study and, to this author's knowledge, does not appear within social work literature, the possibility exists that social work researchers are not receiving as frequent and sufficient education about culturally competent practices as their direct practice counterparts.

Limitations

Given the lack of prior content analysis on the subject of cultural competency in social work journal articles, the findings of this initial analysis offer insightful and useful information to social work researchers, educators, and practice professionals; however, there are limitations to the current study. A particular limitation of this current study is the fact that the analyses of social work scholarship and research were based solely on the textual descriptions of research found within social work journal articles. Given that there was no direct communication with the authors of the journal articles and no direct observation of the research processes implemented by the authors, the findings of this study represent one perspective from which to analyze and discuss the cultural competency practices of social work researchers when examining Latino populations. The findings do not represent a comprehensive analysis of the cultural competency practices that may have been applied during the course of a researcher's efforts and that may have been excluded from the journal article due to the requirements and limitations of manuscript publication.

Another limitation of this content analysis is the number of social work journals included in the study. The journals included in the study were limited to the 13 highest ranked peer-reviewed U.S. social work discipline journals; therefore, the study was not an exhaustive analysis of all social work journals that may have contained articles pertaining to Latino populations in the United States. Despite the limited sample of social work journals, the overall number of articles included in this study approximated the number of articles that were included in a similar content analysis performed by nursing scholars Jacobson et al. (2005). Along with the limited number of social work journals,

the articles included in the content analysis were also limited to the time period between 1990 and 2012. Given that there were articles published before and after the time frame covered in this study, this study was not a comprehensive analysis of all social work articles examining Latino populations, which raises some concerns about generalizability. A broader selection of social work journals may have yielded some variations in the overall results. The limitations identified in this section were primarily due the scope of the study, constraints on the number of research assistants, available resources, and time. Future research efforts may benefit from expanding the number of social work journals and extending the time period to increase the number of articles included in the analysis.

Other limitations of this study are similar to those inherent in all content analyses, including coding bias and inter-reviewer differences. Efforts were made during the development of the coding definitions and throughout reviewer training to standardize the review process; nevertheless, those efforts are subject to researcher bias and influence. Given the potential for researcher bias, there is the possibility that the coding definitions and training process may be interpreted or carried out in a slightly different manner by other reviewers. Content analysis as a research method attempts to control for researcher influence through the development and use of a study codebook and coding scheme throughout the review process in order to provide an objective and standardized method for performing an analysis. In future studies, reviewers who follow this study codebook should find insignificant levels of variability in both the type and amounts of criteria found within a journal article.

Another potential limitation of this study is the use of percentage agreement as the reliability coefficient due to the use of a dichotomous nominal variable. Although

percentage agreement is appropriate for nominal variables and is the most commonly used reliability coefficient when performing content analyses, it is also the simplest form of calculating reliability and fails to account for chance agreement among reviewers (Lombard et al., 2002). When calculating dichotomous nominal variables, reliability coefficients such as Krippendorff's alpha penalize reviewers for consistently perfect agreement and for judgments that show little variability (Freelon, 2013). In other words, reviewers can attain high rates of inter-rater agreement while having low levels of reliability because inter-rater agreement is chance corrected and is significantly punished by reliability coefficients if there is little co-variation among the reviewer agreements (Freelon, 2013). Although this study achieved a high rate of inter-reviewer agreement, the limitations in reliability could be addressed by using an ordinal, interval, or ratio level of measurement that would allow for a range of options from which reviewers could evaluate a variable. For example, reviewers could be trained to evaluate whether a researcher demonstrated a high, medium, or low degree of cultural competency based on the description of the research practice.

The results of the study also showed that there were some minor coding inconsistencies within each of the categories due to differences in criteria interpretation and code assignment. In two instances, for example, researchers in journal articles were described as bicultural, and yet the reviewers mistakenly categorized these descriptions under researcher communication rather than under the correct category of researcher disclosure. In another example of a coding inconsistency during the reviewer comparison process, one reviewer found evidence of a researcher using local social workers from the community to assist with recruiting participants, while the other reviewer did not

associate the social workers as members of the community and thus did not record the description as an example of identity and power. Upon discussing the textual description, the reviewers agreed that the involvement of local social workers in the planning and recruiting efforts was consistent with community involvement in the research process. Despite the occasional reviewer inconsistency, all inter-reviewer differences were successfully resolved among the reviewers. Additional training and clarification of coding definitions and categories may have allowed for even fewer inconsistencies and resulted in a higher rate of inter-reviewer agreement; however, it is not likely that there would be any significant difference in the number of criteria found within the articles.

During the course of the study, the reviewers determined that the two secondary variables—social work practice emphasis and social work area—were problematic in that the measurements were originally designed so that reviewers would judge between mutually exclusive categories. However, upon reviewing journal articles, reviewers quickly found that the responses could not be limited to one category and instead involved multiple categories, which created confusion and frequent inconsistencies. Given the problematic design of those variables, the reviewers determined not to continue to evaluate these two areas, and therefore, the data were not included as part of the study results. However, upon reviewing the qualitative descriptions of the cultural competency criterion of relevance, the results showed a much richer description of the social work topic areas covered within the journal articles. These relevance topic areas are found in Appendix F.

A particular limitation of this study is the ability to assign meaning or significance to the number of cultural competency criteria found within a journal article. Currently,

the use of the criteria framework provides only for a descriptive analysis of the numbers of cultural competency criteria within an article, which is meaningful on a descriptive level as a means of gaining increased insight into the areas of cultural competency in which there are strengths and deficits. Further research will be required to enhance the criteria framework so that it can assign a significance level or meaning to the numbers of cultural competency criteria found within a journal article.

Finally, a limitation that is beyond the scope of the current study is the inability to compare the rate of cultural competency practices found within social work journal articles pertaining to Latino populations in the United States with other social work journal articles involving other cultural groups. This limitation prohibits generalizing to all social work researchers the findings regarding the use of culturally competent practices. This study also does not allow for a comparison with scholars from other allied fields; therefore, this study cannot conclude that social work researchers are applying culturally competent practices at a significantly different rate than researchers from other professions. This study was similar to Jacobson et al. (2005) in assessing journal articles for evidence of the eight cultural competency criteria. However, the adaptations made to the assessment framework by developing subcriteria for each of the criteria, based on practices that pertain to social work practice, did not allow for a direct comparison with the prior assessment performed on journal articles from the nursing profession. Despite this study's limitations, many implications and directions for future studies have emerged as a result of this research.

Implications

As social work researchers and scholars have increasingly published journal articles over the past two decades on Latino populations in the United States, this study examined 124 social work journal articles in order to analyze the extent to which social work researchers applied cultural competency practices in their research and scholarship when examining Latino populations. This study used an assessment framework comprising the eight criteria for culturally competent scholarship developed by Meleis (1996). The assessment framework was congruent with social work values and practices and proved to be a useful academic tool for examining social work journal articles for evidence of culturally competent research practices with Latino populations.

This study adds to the literature on cultural competency research frameworks by expanding upon the previous cultural competency work of Meleis (1996) and the research of Jacobson et al. (2005) in several substantive ways. First, the eight cultural competency criteria framework was expanded to include several subcriteria for each of the original eight criteria, which allowed for a more extensive measurement of the cultural competencies being applied to Latinos by social work researchers. Second, the current study used a mixed-methods approach to content analysis, which allowed for both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the cultural competency practices that were implemented by social work researchers when examining Latino populations. The use of both methods provided a detailed examination of the frequency and type of culturally competent practices being used by social work researchers. Finally, the current study applied co-cultural theory as its theoretical framework as a means of guiding the research effort as well as understanding and interpreting the research outcomes regarding the

research interactions that took place between social work researchers and Latino participants based on the textual descriptions found in social work journal articles. The previous work of Meleis (1996) and Jacobson et al. (2005) did not specify or use a particular theoretical framework to explain or interpret the use of the cultural competency criteria.

In addition to expanding upon the eight criteria assessment framework and furthering the literature on cultural competency research frameworks, this research also contributes to the further use and expansion of co-cultural theory into the area of cultural competency social work research. The congruence between the concepts of co-cultural theory, the eight cultural competency criteria, and social work values and practice provide additional insight and understanding into the use of cultural competency practices by social work researchers with Latino populations by examining the textual descriptions of the research interactions in terms of power differentials, identity, communication, empowerment, relevance, reciprocation, and context. Co-cultural theory, combined with the eight cultural competency criteria, provided one method for objectively examining social work literature for evidence of researchers' efforts to establish a more horizontal and mutually beneficial research relationship based on culturally competent practices in which participants are involved throughout the entire research process and are empowered through the research experience. Based on this study, the expansion of co-cultural theory beyond the field of communication into the area of cultural competency in social work research provided insight into the cultural interactions that took place between Latinos and social work researchers, as well as understanding about the possible impact that may have occurred due to a lack of

interaction. Social work may greatly benefit from the further study and development of co-cultural theory as a research framework that can be used to enhance culturally competent research practice.

In addition to expanding co-cultural theory into the area of cultural competency in social work research, this researcher also applied co-cultural theory in a content analysis format. To this researcher's knowledge, co-cultural theory has not been previously applied in a content analysis approach. Scholars have used co-cultural theory in previous research efforts to examine the cultural interactions that have taken place between nondominant and dominant cultures from a communication standpoint and frequently from the perspective of the nondominant group using primarily qualitative methods (Camara & Orbe, 2010; Matsunaga & Torigoe, 2008; Orbe, 1996; Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). This study expanded the use of co-cultural theory by examining the cultural interactions that took place between a nondominant group, namely the Latino population, with a dominant group, in this case social work researchers, using content analysis to analyze the dominant group's textual descriptions of the interaction as found within social work journal articles. Future research is needed to study whether the experiences and perspectives of the Latino population may have been effectively muted by the lack of sufficient description by social work researchers when publishing journal articles. Additionally, future studies of Latino groups using content analysis within a co-cultural theoretical framework should examine how the power differential between Latino participants and social work researchers potentially affects the writing and publication of the research process in terms of how the research is described, the target audiences of the research, and where the research is published and distributed. The expansion of co-

cultural theory and cultural competency into the area of social work scholarship could further enhance the methods used in conducting and describing social work research.

The objective examination of social work research efforts with Latino populations within social work journals also contributes to the further development of cultural competency in social work research scholarship and practice by providing additional knowledge regarding the culturally competent research practices that are being described within social work journal articles. Identifying which cultural competency practice areas are being commonly described and which are not gives social work researchers who study Latino populations the ability to make changes in how they perform research with Latinos and also to make changes in how they describe the research process in social work journal articles. Further studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing social work research practices and scholarship based on the eight cultural competency criteria and co-cultural theory concepts. This study provides a specific theoretical framework and an assessment tool from which to explore the further development and implementation of such practices in social work research efforts and scholarship.

The results from this study show that social work researchers consistently described the use of cultural competency practices in the areas of relevance, reciprocation, and contextuality. Consistency in these areas was achieved, because social work researchers made certain that when publishing their research they included accurate and detailed descriptions of Latino participants' contexts and that the relevance and benefits of their studies were explicitly stated.

In addition to the findings that identified areas in which social work researchers

demonstrated frequent cultural competencies, the results of this study also identified areas of cultural competency in which social work researchers infrequently or rarely described the use of culturally competent research practices. These areas primarily relate to the need for social work researchers to increase the amount of participant and community involvement throughout the entire research process. Social work researchers who study Latino populations should increasingly allow for and promote Latino participant and community member involvement through efforts such as providing increased opportunities to define the context and relevance of studies as well as to incorporate Latino participants and community members in the decision-making processes throughout the research effort. Increasing participant involvement in the decision-making process can begin in the early stages of the research process by involving Latino participants in the identification of topics that are most relevant to the community. Latino participants can also be involved in the planning and design stages of research projects by providing input regarding culturally effective methods for gaining access to the population, and suggestions regarding culturally competent approaches to studying a particular topic with Latinos. During the middle and end stages of the research process, Latino participants can be involved in decision-making efforts by participating in member-checking activities. In these activities, the researcher reviews the participants' responses with the participants themselves to ensure that their responses were recorded and understood correctly and to allow participants the opportunity to further clarify or expand upon any of their responses.

An additional way in which participants can be involved in the final stages of the research effort is to allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the

research approach taken by the researcher and their own perceptions of the research experience. Giving participants the opportunity to openly discuss their experiences can empower them and can make the research relationship more horizontal as participants help the researcher gain a greater understanding of the areas in which the researcher excelled as well as the elements of the research process that could have been better. Researchers can facilitate participant discussions by holding focus groups, individual interviews, or forming research oversight committees comprising participants and community members. As researchers gain insight into ways in which they could have improved the research process, they can become empowered to enhance the effectiveness of future research efforts with Latinos. Finally, participants can also be provided with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process by facilitating discussions as to their preferred method to disseminate the research information among the community or population and as to how the study results could be used to enhance their well-being and the well-being of the community. Such discussions might occur in focus groups, during individual interviews, or as part of a research oversight committee.

Similarly, Latino community members should be included throughout the research decision-making process by giving them opportunities to provide input regarding the relevance of the research endeavor and to assist with the design and implementation of the study. Latino community members can provide researchers with insight and feedback regarding culturally appropriate ways to approach community participants about research topics involving culturally sensitive issues. Latino community members can also help in determining which research materials are culturally and linguistically appropriate based on their knowledge of the community. Finally, Latino

community members can play a critical role in interpreting and disseminating research findings and in determining how to use the outcomes of a study to empower community members and to enhance the community's well-being. Culturally competent research practices such as those mentioned have been widely promoted throughout the literature on culturally competent research approaches with culturally diverse groups (Aisenberg, 2008; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Meleis, 1996; Mendias & Guevara, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Saltus, 2006; Smith, 2009).

As was identified in several instances in the discussion section, a significant barrier to applying many of the cultural competency criteria was most likely the types of research that were performed. For example, literature reviews and secondary data analyses were two areas of research and scholarship that had particular limits and challenges in the application of certain cultural competency practices, given the lack of direct participant involvement and interaction opportunities. These limitations, however, should not exempt those who pursue these types of scholarship from applying the maximum possible amount of cultural competency criteria. These researchers could make additional efforts to identify researcher bias, allow for member checking or peer review from Latino community members, or empower communities based on the research findings.

The findings from this study provide social work researchers and scholars who perform research with Latino populations in the United States with important insight as to specific areas wherein there are opportunities to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria being applied in their research and scholarship efforts. In order to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria used in social work research and

scholarship pertaining to Latino populations, changes to social work research practice should occur on an individual level by social work researchers and on a systemic level within social work education programs.

On an individual level, social work researchers should apply the cultural competency criteria in both research and scholarship efforts when examining Latino populations. Social work research could begin to enhance the amount of cultural competency criteria within their research manuscripts by using the cultural competency criteria as a framework to analyze their research manuscripts prior to submitting them for publication. An assessment of the cultural competency criteria prior to submission could help researchers to ensure that the document addresses each of the cultural competency criteria and the research practices used to achieve the criteria. In situations where independent review of research manuscripts is required or requested, peer reviewers could use the cultural competency criteria to examine documents, providing feedback to researchers about the number of cultural competency criteria found in the documents and identifying areas that require further descriptions of the culturally competent practices. Further studies should evaluate whether the use of the cultural competency criteria as an assessment framework during the writing of research manuscripts would have an impact on the amount of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles.

In a similar effort to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria within social work journal articles about Latino populations, social work researchers could use the cultural competency criteria as a research framework throughout the entire research effort. For example, social work researchers could use the cultural competency criteria as a framework during the early stages of the research to assist in the design and planning of

the research as a means of maximizing the amount of cultural competency criteria that could be achieved during the research efforts. The cultural competency criteria could also be used throughout the research process by the researcher to assess the degree to which the research efforts were addressing the cultural competency criteria and to make adjustments during the research process to ensure the criteria were being met. During the final stages of the research, social work researchers could use the cultural competency criteria as an assessment tool to evaluate the cultural competency criteria that were achieved during the research process and to make adjustments in future research efforts with Latino populations to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria achieved during the research process. In order to maximize the amount of cultural competency criteria described within a journal article, social work researchers should use the cultural competency framework throughout the research process as well as during the writing of the research manuscript. Further study is needed to evaluate whether using the cultural competency criteria as an assessment framework throughout the research process would increase the amount of cultural competency criteria used during the research efforts with Latino populations and whether increasing cultural competency criteria would affect the amount of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles.

In many cases, increasing the amount of cultural competency criteria achieved within a journal article would require some modifications on the part of the researcher. For example, in the areas of disclosure and communication, social work researchers could achieve several criteria by including a brief statement about their efforts to accommodate the communication needs of the Latino participants during the informed consent process. The communication accommodations could have included a description that a bilingual

and bicultural research assistant was used to explain the informed consent document to the participants and that the informed consent document was available in Spanish for those participants whose primary language is not English. Another cultural competency criterion that could be achieved with minimal modifications would be the area of time. Social work researchers could include a brief description of the impact that the research had on the participants' time, as well as what accommodations were made to account for the impact on the participants' time. Along with those descriptions, a brief statement about how the time accommodations affected the overall research process would help to achieve each of the criteria within the area of time. A social work researcher could also raise the amount of cultural competency in the area of identity and power by including a brief description of his or her background and the potential influence or biases that may have affected the research efforts. Modifications to social work research and scholarship such as those mentioned could help to reassure direct and indirect social work practitioners that the research performed with the Latino participants was carried out using culturally competent practices. Research performed in a culturally competent manner assists in establishing the ethical nature of the research and contributes to the credibility, validity, and effectiveness of the research outcomes (Aisenberg, 2008; Ojeda et al., 2011; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Walker & Staton, 2000). Future studies would be necessary to determine whether the amount of cultural competency criteria found within a journal article influences a social work professional's perception of the quality, credibility, and validity of the research article.

Over the past several decades, the concept of cultural competency has been primarily emphasized among direct practice social work professionals and social work

organizations, while cultural competence in social work research has been a somewhat recent development and has been relatively unexplored (Jani et al., 2009; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). With regard to the use of cultural competency practices by social work researchers, the results of this study showed that there were no significant changes in the frequency of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles during a 23-year period. The exact reasons for these insignificant changes are unknown and are beyond the scope of this current study. To address the frequency of cultural competency practices applied in social work research, systemic changes may be necessary within social work education regarding the application of the cultural competency criteria in research and scholarship on Latino populations and, potentially, other culturally diverse populations. In an effort to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria within social work journal articles pertaining to Latino populations, social work education programs nationwide should incorporate instruction regarding the concepts and application of the cultural competency criteria framework within social work research curricula. The cultural competency criteria framework could form part of the social work research courses in both master's and doctoral programs as a means of introducing the concepts and application of the criteria. At a master's level, social work students would receive instruction in their research courses about the cultural competency criteria and their role and application in social work research and scholarship. Education about the use and application of the cultural competency criteria is crucial when learning about the research process and assessing the quality of research being produced. The importance of such education becomes increasingly pertinent as students become consumers of research as direct and indirect practitioners. Master's-level students will learn to apply the cultural

competency criteria while assessing research. Some of these students may eventually enroll in social work doctoral programs, and they will be well prepared, having already received some instruction regarding the application of the cultural competency criteria in social work research and scholarship.

Perhaps the most applicable forum for influencing social work research and scholarship will be in the education and training of doctoral students. At the doctoral level, research courses could incorporate both the concepts behind and the application of the cultural competency criteria in social work research and scholarship. Such instruction would focus on enhancing doctoral students' understanding of each of the cultural competency criteria categories as well as on educating them about the practical application of the cultural competency framework when performing research and when writing research manuscripts.

Incorporating the cultural competency criteria into the research curricula for both master's and doctoral programs would require social work faculty to receive instruction about the theoretical and conceptual framework of the cultural competency criteria. Faculty instruction would include training about co-cultural theory and its relationship to the cultural competency criteria. After receiving instruction on co-cultural theory, faculty would then receive training about the cultural competency criteria. Faculty training about the cultural competency criteria would include instruction on its background, development, concepts and application in social work research and scholarship. As part of the training, faculty members would have opportunities to use the cultural competency criteria to assess social work journal publications for evidence of cultural competency practices. After using the cultural competency criteria to assess journal articles, faculty

would have the opportunity to discuss the results of their assessments and address how the researcher of the article could have increased the amount of cultural competency criteria during the research process and in the writing of the research manuscript. Faculty instruction and training would also include supplemental materials about the cultural competency criteria as well as a suggested curriculum outline to incorporate into their existing research courses.

The training and instruction of faculty and students about the cultural competency criteria on a systemic level throughout social work educational programs would likely have the most significant impact on increasing the amount of cultural competency criteria applied in research and scholarship efforts with Latino populations. After the implementation of those changes to doctoral-level education, further studies using a similar methodology as the one used in this current study would be necessary to confirm whether the instruction of faculty and doctoral students about the cultural competency criteria resulted in an increased amount of criteria found within social work journal articles.

In addition to the recommendation that social work education programs incorporate the cultural competency criteria into their research curriculum, the CSWE should similarly incorporate the concepts and application of the cultural competency criteria into its education policy and curriculum standards within the areas of research-informed practice and diversity. Changes by the CSWE to the educational policy and curriculum standards in the areas of research-informed practice and diversity would be the most effective method for bringing about significant changes at the master's level because of the role that the CSWE has in the accreditation of social work education

programs.

In addition to changes made by the CSWE, the NASW should similarly implement changes in its cultural competency standards and practice indicators. The NASW has made consistent efforts over the past two decades to enhance the cultural competency of social work professionals by publishing specific cultural competency standards and practice indicators; however, the standards and practice indicators focus primarily on direct practice social work professionals and social work organizations. The current cultural competency practice standards and indicators publications include few references to social work research and little if any mention of the practical application of the standards and indicators when performing social work research with culturally diverse groups. The ability to make any conclusive statements regarding possible correlations between the rates of cultural competency criteria found in social work journal articles and attempts made by NASW to increase culturally competent social work practice is beyond the scope of the current study. Further studies using a similar methodology to the one used in this current study would be necessary to evaluate whether incorporating the cultural competency criteria as part of the NASW cultural competency standards and practice indicators resulted in an increased number of criteria found within social work journal articles pertaining to Latino populations.

Despite the inability to make any definitive statements about the possible correlations between social work research education or the NASW publications and the amount of cultural competency criteria found within social work journal articles, the results of the study are useful to social work researchers on a descriptive level. The study results identified numerous cultural competency criteria that were not applied on a

frequent basis by social work researchers within social work journal articles pertaining to Latino populations. The lack of cultural competency criteria found in the areas of participant and community involvement, relevance, and context demonstrate a need for improvement among social work researchers when performing research and scholarship with Latinos. Improvement in those criteria areas as well as others that have been identified in this study could likely be addressed by implementing the recommendations in social work research education and in the NASW cultural competency standards and practice indicators.

To this author's knowledge, this study is the first attempt to analyze the number of cultural competency practices demonstrated by social work researchers in their research and scholarship with Latino populations. Given that this study involved the initial use of the cultural competency criteria as a framework for assessing social work journal articles for evidence of the cultural competency criteria being applied by social work researchers when examining Latino populations, further testing and analysis of the framework's reliability, accuracy, and validity is recommended. Such testing and analysis could be performed by an independent group of reviewers using the same protocol outlined in this study's codebook and by selecting a random sample of articles from those reviewed as part of this study. The findings from the two studies could be compared to one another to determine whether there was a significant difference in the number of criteria found in the journal articles. If no significant differences were found between the two studies, the results could be used to further establish the reliability, accuracy, and validity of the cultural competency criteria framework.

The cultural competency criteria used in this study may also prove to be an

effective assessment tool in performing subsequent analyses of its kind using social work journal articles that examine other culturally diverse populations. Additional analyses of social work journal articles pertaining to cultural groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and others would help to further establish the cultural competency criteria as a credible framework for assessing the cultural competency criteria applied by social work researchers in their research and scholarship. Future social work research should also evaluate the use of the cultural competency criteria framework as part of the actual research process similar to its use in studies performed by Im, Meleis, and Park (1999) with Korean women; by Mill and Ogilvie (2003) on a case study from Ghana; and by Mendias and Guevara (2001) regarding health care in Mexico. Similar to those studies, future social work research could evaluate the effectiveness of the cultural competency criteria as a research framework to enhance the amount of cultural competency criteria used throughout the entire research process with Latino populations or other cultural groups. Such studies could be carried out by providing social work researchers with the cultural competency criteria framework before they begin their research efforts with Latinos and then again upon completion of the research. Then an independent researcher could use quantitative and qualitative measures to determine how the framework was applied and whether the researchers found the cultural competency criteria useful in performing and assessing their research. A subsequent content analysis of those studies could then be performed using the cultural competency criteria framework to analyze the amount of cultural competency criteria found within the research manuscript. A content analysis of the research manuscripts may reveal that social work researchers apply a greater number of cultural competency criteria when

provided the cultural competency criteria framework prior to performing the actual study.

Summary

This chapter identified multiple implications for social work research and scholarship pertaining to Latino populations based on the findings of the current study. Examples were provided of ways in which social work researchers could modify their research and scholarship practices to increase the amount of cultural competency criteria found in their journal articles. Recommendations regarding the possible use of the cultural competency criteria in social work research and scholarship efforts on an individual and systemic level were also outlined. Finally, direction for future research studies related to the further testing and expansion of the cultural competency criteria as an assessment framework for social work research and scholarship were presented.

Conclusion

The values and ethics of the social work profession have positioned social workers to be leaders in the area of culturally competent practice (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). In a continuous effort to enhance the cultural competency knowledge and skills of both its direct and indirect practitioners, the social work profession has implemented numerous cultural competency standards and guidelines into its educational curriculum and as part of the NASW *Code of Ethics* (CSWE, 2012; NASW, 2007, 2008). As such, social workers must continually seek to enhance their understanding and application of culturally competent concepts and practices, particularly as the U.S. population becomes increasingly culturally diverse. Social work professionals will continue to have greater

contact with Latino clients as a result of the growth and expansion of the Latino population in the United States and as a result of the numerous societal barriers that face many Latino individuals, families, and communities (Castex, 1994; Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Furman et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Organista, 2009). The heterogeneity of the Latino population and the unique cultural context of Latino populations require social work professionals to become familiar with and consistently apply culturally competent practices.

Social work researchers play a critical role in providing direct and indirect social workers with accurate information about Latino populations (Lum, 2005). As research often forms the basis for theory development, practice models, and social work education (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Marsh et al., 2004; Mokuau et al., 2008; D. Sue, 2006), social work researchers must ensure that the research being performed among culturally diverse populations is carried out in a culturally competent manner in order to provide social work professionals with accurate knowledge and effective recommendations (Casado et al., 2012; Marsh et al., 2004; Meleis, 1996; D. Sue, 2006). Research that does not adhere to cultural competency standards and guidelines may ultimately produce knowledge that serves to reinforce stereotypes and practices that marginalize minority groups and result in a lower quality of care (Casado et al., 2012; Meleis, 1996; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Until now, there has not been an attempt to assess whether or not cultural competency practices are being applied by social work researchers in their scholarship and research with Latino populations in United States. The cultural competency criteria framework used in this study provided a meaningful way to objectively assess social work research and scholarship for culturally competent practices. The results of this study

found evidence within social work journal articles that social work researchers examining Latino populations in the United States were applying many cultural competency practices on a fairly consistent basis within several areas of cultural competency; however, for several areas of cultural competency there was little evidence that researchers were applying cultural competency practices. This author hopes that this study will add to the knowledge base of cultural competency in social work research and that the findings from the study will be used by current and future social work researchers and scholars to enhance the use of culturally competent practices in their scholarship and research with Latino populations.

APPENDIX A

STUDY CODEBOOK

The content analysis for this study will use the following set of codebook instructions. Each reviewer will have access to the codebook for reference during the analysis to refer to the definitions, case examples and identifying information for each of the study's variables. The reviewers will work independently during the content analysis of the articles. The following are descriptions of the study's components and variables.

Unit of analysis: A peer-reviewed social work journal article that is specific to the U.S. Latino population and published between 1990 and 2012. The journals and articles included in the study's sample are based on the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria found in the main body of the study's text.

Unit of data collection: The data unit is the occurrence of a particular variable (as defined by the study's codebook) within the article's text. Data collection will be recorded on the study's coding form, which is found in the subsequent section. The content analysis will examine the article's introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and implication sections. The article's abstract and reference page will not be analyzed. The content analysis will involve the examination of the primary and secondary set of variables. Descriptions and examples of each variable are contained within this codebook.

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered during the content analysis. The quantitative data gathering process consists of the reviewer indicating on a coding form whether or not each of the eight cultural competency criteria was found within the text. The presence of the criteria within the article will be determined by achieving at least one of the designated criterion measurements. During the content analysis, if the reviewer finds no evidence that the criterion occurred within the article, a 0 will be

entered on the coding form in the column entitled “Criteria Present. If evidence of the criterion is found within the article, a 1 will be entered on the coding form in the column entitled Present. If a criterion is present within the article, the reviewer will also indicate on the coding form in the column entitled Measures the number(s) of the corresponding criterion measures that provide evidence of the criterion’s application. In addition to the study’s primary variables, reviewers will record the study’s secondary variables on the coding form using the categorical classification numerals indicated in the study’s codebook.

The qualitative data gathering process consists of the reviewer recording in the qualitative section of the coding form the written text that describes the author’s use of the criteria within the article. The qualitative description may range from recording a single sentence to several sentences, depending on the author’s description of the criteria. The qualitative data will record each description of the criteria’s occurrence throughout the document, which may include multiple descriptions throughout the document.

Reviewer Instructions

The reviewer will use a blank qualitative coding form for each new document. The following information will be filled in as part of the coding form prior to analyzing the document.

Article title:	List entire article title
Journal title:	List entire journal title
Author name:	List full name of the first author (Last name, First name, Middle initial)
Article ID:	Fill in the article ID number from study sample list

Article year: Fill in the year the article was published

Reviewer name: List name of the individual coding the article

For data collection and analysis purposes, each of the eight criteria has been assigned the following identification number:

1- Contextuality

2- Relevance

3- Communication Styles

4- Awareness of identity and power differential

5- Disclosure

6- Reciprocation

7- Empowerment

8- Time

The reviewer will use only one of the eight criteria at a time during the text analysis. Reviewers will use the criteria in sequential order beginning with criterion number one and proceeding through criterion number eight. The reviewer is not to examine the document using multiple criteria simultaneously. Once the reviewer has identified the specific criterion for analysis, the reviewer will review the criterion's codebook definition and case examples prior to beginning the analysis of the text. The reviewer will analyze the text beginning at the article's introduction and will proceed until the end of the document, excluding the reference page.

The reviewer will analyze the document for evidence of the particular criterion based on the codebook's definition of the criterion and the case example of the criterion measures. If the reviewer finds evidence of a criterion measure within the article, the

following steps will be taken: (1) The reviewer will record a 1 on the coding form in the column entitled Criteria Present, which is next to the name of the particular criterion. (2) The reviewer will then record the number of occurrences of the criterion measure on the coding form under the Measures column that corresponds to the specific criterion measure.(3) The reviewer will record the textual description of the culturally competent practice on the qualitative section of the coding form under the appropriate criteria category.

Each occurrence of a criterion measure will be recorded on the coding form under the corresponding Measures column. There is no limit to the number of occurrences that can be recorded on the coding form for each of the criterion measures. Reviewers will follow the same content analysis protocol for each of the eight criteria. Once the document has been analyzed for the eight criteria, reviewers will proceed to the secondary variable analysis protocol.

Descriptions and Examples of the Cultural Competency Criteria

This section contains the coding definitions and descriptions of the eight criteria and subcriteria that were used during the content analysis of the journal article to code the textual evidence that met the criteria description.

Contextuality

Contextuality was defined as knowledge and awareness of the participants' lifestyles and environment, which includes current economic, cultural, social, and historical context. The following are the descriptions of the four subcategories of contextuality: (1) The researcher gathers economic, cultural, social, and historical context

through direct communication with the participants by such means as interviews, meetings, or focus groups. (2) The researcher gathers economic, cultural, social, and historical context through direct communication with indirect participants such as community leaders or local members of the community through such means as interviews, meetings, or focus groups. (3) The researcher gathers economic, cultural, social, and historical context by obtaining written or other published communications such as community needs assessments, research literature, local journalism, or other community-specific information. (4) General/generic Latino information is presented as context for the study/paper.

Relevance

Relevance was defined as follows: the research topic is meaningful and beneficial to the population's social welfare and is useful to the social work profession. The following are the descriptions of the four subcategories of relevance: (1) Direct participants are involved in the identification of issues or problems relevant to their lives or their community. In cases where the topic was determined prior to the study, researchers can apply the criterion of relevance by providing direct participants with an opportunity to discuss whether they believe the particular topic is relevant to their situation or how the topic may benefit their lives. This discussion may be in the form of interviews, focus groups, and/or questionnaires. (2) Indirect participants such as community leaders are involved in the identification of issues or problems relevant to the community. In cases where the research topic was determined prior to the study, researchers can apply the criterion of relevance by providing community members with an opportunity to discuss whether they believe the particular topic is relevant to their

community or how the topic may benefit the community. This may be in the form of interviews, focus groups, and/or questionnaires. (3) Local social workers are involved in the identification of issues or problems relevant to social work with the Latino community. In cases where the topic was determined prior to the study, researchers can apply the criterion of relevance by providing local social workers with an opportunity to discuss whether they believe the particular topic is relevant to the Latino community or how the topic may benefit the lives of Latinos in their community. (4) Researcher identifies the issues or problems facing the population and the relevance to the community.

Communication

Communication was defined as understanding and using the most effective or preferred form(s) of communication based on the populations' input or knowledge of the population being studied. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of communication: (1) Preferred forms of communication are defined by the direct participants or they are able to select from multiple communication formats. This information is gathered through interviews or focus groups. (2) Research materials such as forms, tools, and other written materials are linguistically and culturally appropriate for the population and are revised as necessary. The study should state how or where the forms were developed or if they have been reviewed for language and cultural appropriateness. (3) Bilingual/bicultural research staff or teams of research staff and community members are used during the research process to communicate with participants.

Identity and Power

The criterion of identity and power was defined as the researcher's recognition that a power differential exists between academic researchers and participants, particularly when working with culturally diverse populations. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of identity and power: (1) Direct participants take an active role in decision-making processes. They are able to provide input as to how the research should be carried out and are involved in making decisions about the research process. (2) Indirect participants take an active role in decision-making processes. They are able to provide input as to how the research should be carried out and are involved in making decisions about the research process. (3) Researcher and staff follow culturally appropriate behavior and customs, which can include meeting with participants in culturally sensitive locations, wearing appropriate dress, and respecting the cultural norms of the community.

Disclosure

Disclosure was defined as an awareness and recognition by the researcher that issues related to privacy, trust, and secrecy may exist among culturally diverse populations. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of disclosure: (1) Researcher discusses the willingness of direct participants to participate in the research. Researcher records observations about the participants' willingness to share experiences or participate in the study, or specific comments are made by the participants that show concerns over the research being done. (2) Researcher discusses strategies to build trust with the direct participants. Researcher may learn customs, attend local customary events, or spend extra amounts of time with participants with the recognition

that it is culturally appropriate to establish trust. (3) Institutional review board documents are reviewed in a culturally appropriate manner using appropriate communication accommodations to sufficiently answer questions about confidentiality and privacy. Bilingual/bicultural staff is used to interpret or explain the IRB details.

Reciprocation

Reciprocation was defined as efforts on the part of the researcher to ensure that participants received some tangible benefit from participation in the research effort and that the researcher achieved his or her research goals to benefit the profession. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of reciprocation: (1) Participants identify research goals and expected benefits from their participation. Compensation for participation and providing culturally appropriate incentives (financial, merchandise, dinner, etc.) are discussed. (2) Community leaders identify research goals and expected benefits to the community. (3) Researcher identifies the research goals and expected benefits that the research will bring to the participants and community. Researcher discusses with participants the benefits the research is expected to have on their lives and community.

Empowerment

Empowerment was defined as follows: the participants and community gained additional knowledge, skills, or abilities to improve their welfare or make changes to their environment. The research acknowledges changes that could have been made to the research process to better account for cultural factors. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of empowerment: (1) Participants gained knowledge or skills to

enhance their lives and the welfare of the community. Participants may have attended a course or participated in an intervention that taught skills or knowledge about parenting, mental health, lifestyle changes, or community action. Participants may have learned to advocate for changes in their own lives or to improve their community. (2) Indirect participants such as community leaders or community members gained knowledge or skills from the research to enhance the welfare of the community. Through participation in the research, community leaders learned ways to improve their community or gained knowledge regarding a particular topic useful to the population. (3) The researcher acknowledged how the research process could have been improved or adapted to better account for the participants' culture. Some examples of research improvements that could better account for the participants' culture may include increased involvement in the research process, additional language accommodations, use of incentives and additional time with participants.

Time

The criterion of time was defined as follows: the researcher acknowledged the impact of the research on the participants' time and lifestyle, and the researcher made the necessary accommodations during the research process to account for the participants' time. The researcher also acknowledges how time affected the research process in general. The following are the descriptions of the three subcategories of time: (1) Research accounts for participants' perceptions or use of time and/or the impact of the research on the participants' time. (2) Research demonstrates time flexibility during the research process and to the research timeline to adapt to the participants' perceptions and use of time. Interviews, meetings, or groups were held at times that were convenient to

participants, or accommodations were made to be flexible to the time demands of work, family, or cultural activities that may have limited participation. (3) Researcher discusses the impact that perceptions of time had on the study's results and how accommodations may have helped increase participation or seemed to allow for greater trust among the participants.

Secondary Variable Protocol

Reviewers will use the same coding form to record the article's secondary variables as was used for the eight criteria. Reviewers will analyze the document and record the following secondary variables on the coding form if present within the article:

Secondary Variable #1: Article Classification

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form which of the following classification categories best describes the article. The reviewer will record the numeric id of the article classification on the coding form.

1= Descriptive (qualitative studies, interviews, and quantitative correlational or comparative studies).

2= Interventional (experimental studies with a manipulation of an independent variable).

3= Methodological (instrument development or evaluation, studies comparing methodological strategies).

4= Process/experiential (narrative experiences related to personal or procedural experiences or performing fieldwork).

5= Review of literature.

6= Secondary data analysis

Secondary Variable #2: Research Methodology

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the research methodology used in the article. The reviewer will record the numeric id of the research method on the coding form.

1= Quantitative

2= Qualitative

3= Mixed methods

4= Other

Secondary Variable #3: Participants' Nationality

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form which of the following participant nationalities are represented within the article. The reviewer will record the numeric id of the nationality on the coding form. If multiple nationalities are found in the article then the reviewer will select the multiple groups category.

1= American

2= Mexican

3= Puerto Rican

4= Cuban

5= Dominican

6= Central American

7= South American

8= Multiple groups

9= Unspecified/Unable to determine

Secondary Variable #4: Participants' Citizenship Status

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the citizenship status of the participants in the article. The reviewer will record the numeric id of each citizenship status on the coding form. Multiple citizenships may be present within the article, and each should be recorded.

1= U.S. citizen

2= U.S. resident immigrant

3= Undocumented immigrant

4= Unspecified/unable to determine

Secondary Variable #5: Participants' Generational Status.

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the generational status of the participants in the article. The reviewer will record on the coding form the numeric id of the participants' generational status. Multiple generational statuses may be present within the article, and each should be recorded.

1= First-generation Latino immigrant (participant born outside the United States)

2= Second-generation Latino (participant born in the United States with at least one parent being a first-generation immigrant)

3= Third-generation Latino (participant born in the United States with both parents being U.S.-born citizens)

4= Unspecified/unable to determine

Secondary Variable #6: Social Work Practice Emphasis

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the primary social work practice emphasis described in the article. The reviewer will record on the

coding form the numeric id of the primary practice emphasis and the letter of the direct practice role that corresponds to the practice emphasis. If multiple practice categories are found within the article, each should be included on the coding form.

1= Direct practice (Case manager or mental health therapist)

2= Indirect practice (Administrator, policy maker, community organizer, educator, researcher)

3= Both direct and indirect practice

Secondary Variable #7: Social Work Area of Focus.

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the primary social work area of focus described in the article using the numeric id of the primary social work area.

1= Mental health

2= Health

3= Criminal justice

4= Child welfare

5= School

6= Geriatric/Elderly

7= Substance abuse

8= Other (List)

Secondary Variable #8: Author's Discipline

Reviewers will review the article and identify on the coding form the first author's profession using the numeric id of the profession.

1= Social work

2= Psychology

3= Sociology

4= Anthropology

5= Family and consumer studies

6= Educational psychology

7= Other (list)

8= Unspecified

APPENDIX B

QUANTITATIVE CODING FORM

CODING FORM										
Article Title										
Journal Title										
Author name(s)										
Article Year										
Article ID#										
Coder name										
SECONDARY VARIABLES										
	ID #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Article classification		Descriptive	Intervention	Methodological	Experiential	Lit Review	Secondary data			
Nationality		American	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Dominican	Central American	South American	Multiple groups	Unspecified
Citizenship status		US citizen	Legal resident	Undocumented	Multiple	Unspecified				
Generational status		1st generation	2nd generation	3rd generation	Multiple	Unspecified				
Practice emphasis		Direct practice	Indirect practice	Both dir and ind						
Area of focus		Mental health	Health	Criminal Justice	Child welfare	Geriatric	Substance abuse	Other (list)		
Author's discipline		Social Work	Psychology	Sociology	Anthropology	Family studies	Ed. Psychology	Other (list)		
EIGHT CRITERIA										
		Measures								
Criteria	**Present? 1=Yes 0=No**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**					
Contextuality										
Relevance										
Communication Style										
Identity and power										
Disclosure										
Reciprocation										
Empowerment										
Time										

APPENDIX C

QUALITATIVE CODING FORM

Article #:
Author Name:
Journal Name:

Criteria
Contextuality
1)
2)
3)
4)
Relevance
1)
2)
3)
4)
Communication Style
1)
2)
3)
Identity and Power
1)
2)
3)
Disclosure
1)
2)
3)
Reciprocation
1)
2)
3)
Empowerment
1)
2)
3)
Time
1)
2)
3)

APPENDIX D

CODEBOOK AND CODING SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

This section discusses the changes that were made during the research process to enhance the quality of the research project, and this section addresses the experiences and observations of the coders during and after the research process. The following section discusses the changes that were made to the coding definitions and process.

Criteria Clarification and Changes

The coders were encouraged to provide frequent feedback during the research process in order to answer questions and address concerns. Because of the coders' feedback and questions, discussions took place during the initial coding stages in order to clarify the meaning and definition of the eight criteria and their subcriteria. Changes to the criteria definitions and examples helped to increase the specificity of the categories and to increase reviewer objectivity and accuracy. The following paragraphs describe the changes made to the criteria as a result of our coder discussions.

The contextuality definitions and qualitative examples for participants and community members were clarified to state that the researcher needed to have obtained the information through a form of direct contact rather than by simply using a demographic questionnaire or survey. This was changed in order to provide a clearer understanding as to how the contextual data were gathered and whether the direct participants were provided a direct opportunity to share their contextual experiences or if the demographic information was a substitute for that process. The definition of contextuality with regard to the local community environment was changed to go beyond the simple mention of a city or region by name. The criterion was clarified to mean that the author must have included some form of quantitative or qualitative data regarding the local area or population so that the reader was provided with a clearer understanding of

the city's or region's context.

The definition of reciprocation was adapted for each of the subcriteria. The participant criterion was restricted to tangible benefits that were offered to participants by researchers. Community reciprocation included benefits such as the establishment of programs or training programs. Researcher reciprocation was clarified to indicate the knowledge researchers produced in order to benefit the social work profession.

The definition of relevance was changed to remove the statement about the use of the relevance data to inform the development of the research questions, interpretation of results, and the dissemination of the data. The definition was limited to the identification of relevant issues and problems related to the population.

The subcriteria definitions and examples of communication were clarified to enhance the mutual exclusivity of the categories. The first subcriterion indicates that the researcher allowed participants to select from multiple language formats. The second subcriterion indicates whether written materials were provided in multiple communication formats or if additional accommodations were made to explain the forms. The third subcriterion tracked whether or not the researcher or research staff was bilingual or involved community members who were knowledgeable about the communication patterns used by the participants.

The definition and example of participant disclosure was made more concise about the researcher documenting the participants' willingness to or concerns about participating in any portion of the research process. The IRB information or informed consent needed to have been obtained by either being signed by the participant or discussed with the participant rather than simply mentioning that IRB was approved by

the university. The third subcriterion's definition and example were clarified to indicate that the researcher made specific efforts to build trust with the participants by getting to know the participants personally or by carrying out research efforts in locations that were familiar to the participants. Building trust with participants also included using staff that was described as bicultural or that had specific knowledge of the population being studied. The ordering of disclosure on the coding form was changed to match the rest of the coding form. The IRB statement was designated as the second subcriterion, and researcher disclosure as the third subcriterion.

The definition of participant and community empowerment was clarified to mean any knowledge or skills gained by participants or community members as a result of their participation in the research. Empowerment was also considered to be present if participants and community members used the knowledge or skills they gained to bring about social change or improve their community. Researcher empowerment was clarified to mean that the researcher identified specific ways in which the research study could have better addressed cultural aspects of the participants or identified specific limitations caused by cultural factors.

The definition of identity and power for participants and community was clarified from previous statements that mentioned participation in the entire research process and active decision making. The definition was adapted to state that participant and community participation can refer to any part of the research process where feedback or input is provided, decisions are made, or assistance with the research project is given. The definition of research identity and power was clarified to indicate the researcher's acknowledgement of personal identity characteristics or potential biases and influences

that they may have had during the research.

The subcriteria of time were clarified to enhance mutual exclusivity. The first subcriterion was meant to indicate the impact of time on the participant. The second was to indicate the adjustments that the researcher made to the research process to accommodate participant needs. The final subcriterion was the general impact that time had on the research process or on the results.

APPENDIX E

REVIEWER FEEDBACK AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

At the end of this research study, each coder was asked to provide feedback about the research process and personal observations that were made during the research. The reviewers included two graduate students, one female and one male. The following is a description of their experience regarding the research process as well as personal observations.

Regarding the research process, the female coder stated that she found the beginning of the research project to be fairly difficult and time consuming because of the amount of information being gathered and the need to look in the codebook frequently for definitions and examples to clarify some of the criteria. She stated that after reviewing several articles, the coding process moved fairly quickly as she better understood the criteria definitions and became accustom to using the coding form. Some types of articles were easier for her to review than others. For example, literature reviews and secondary data articles were less intense because the authors primarily included information from other sources and were not directly interacting with participants; therefore, many of the criteria were not addressed. On the other hand, there were articles that required extensive time because the research was very thorough and the review process required a much closer reading of the article in order to capture the data. She expressed that she had some confusion in the beginning regarding the definition of researcher empowerment. After a discussion among the coders, we were able to clarify the definition in a way that was understood by each of the coders and that would allow us to gather meaningful data.

She also made several personal observations about her experience reviewing the articles. An initial observation she made was the lack of articles about Latino populations in prominent social work journals such as those published by NASW.

Being bilingual and having an interest in Latino culture, she found several articles that applied to her current employment position and that she had not read previously.

She was surprised by the lack of reciprocation provided to the participants and the lack of gathering contextual information from the participants and community. Another observation she felt was significant was the fact that most of the articles were about the Mexican American population and very few covered other Latino populations. By the end of the research, she observed that social work researchers were not doing an adequate job of including evidence of using culturally competent research practices in their writing and hoped that these practices were occurring during the actual research process.

The male coder involved in the study provided the following description about his experience and observations during the researcher process:

> One of the things that stood out to me about the research process was the difficulty in quantifying the terms that we were searching for as a coder. The definition and specification of what qualified as a quantitative and codable piece of data was very well clarified in the methods section of our coding category sheet; however, I still found myself having difficulties with being able to trust if what I was identifying in the qualitative descriptive analysis I was reading captured the spirit of what it was we were truly looking for. I found myself relying on simple wording choice of the author to justify my decision to code or qualify a particular section.
>
> To try and stay away from my personal and biased opinion of the subject coloring the study, I believe I may have given some authors credit for culturally sound research in instances where I did not believe the researcher was doing a competent job although their wording choice followed very closely to what was specified in our rubric. Also, on the counter side of that argument, I believe I may have not given some credit to authors who I believed did fulfill aspects of culturally competent practice and research that we were looking for. But their wording in their article made it something I would have to make an inference as to what I interpreted their meaning or motivation to be and defend my position on it, and that seemed like too much interference and coloration from my own invested perspective that could create the exact unreliability issues that we were trying to avoid.
>
> Another thing I started to notice towards the end of the study (which is distantly

> related to the topic of the above paragraphs) is that I began to look for just the topics I was searching for and was not necessarily reading the article to understand the study more in depth. Near the end, I could code an article without really ever realizing what the article was "about" or "trying to accomplish." I cared only about whether or not they fulfilled the requirements we were searching for and therefore would not have been in a competent position to make further assumptions about whether or not the authors were, at the core, practicing in a culturally competent manner or not.
>
> At the beginning of the process, I definitely had difficulties with trusting myself in recognizing that what I was seeing would be qualified as a codable piece of data or not, but this definitely got easier the further along in the process I got. I also found myself questioning my abilities to identify pertinent material if there was an article that did not contain much codable information. I would find myself trying to fit nonrelevant material into codable categories and give the authors credit they did not deserve for culturally competent practice just so as a coder I could feel like I was noticing and accomplishing something. These articles I would need to spend more time with so that I could consciously be aware of myself coming into play in the research and be mindful of keeping myself objective.
>
> I also noted that according to our criteria, literature reviews and meta-analysis were some of the lowest ranking articles on the totem pole for demonstrating cultural competence because they did nothing to include actual participants or participants' opinions and participation in the discussion. With literature reviews and meta-analysis papers contributing significantly to this body of research, if the study has been done incorrectly in the first place, incorrect information will be hammered into the "common understanding" of this population due to the sheer amount of reiteration of that information by researchers not taking the effort to keep fact checking with members of the population to keep themselves on course. (K. C. Santistevan, personal communication, November 10, 2014)

Researcher Observations and Reflexivity

This section includes my personal observations related to the research process and outcomes. From the initial stages of the research process, I was frequently mindful of my previous personal experiences of having read several social work journal articles regarding Latino populations and questioning whether the research was performed in a culturally competent manner. My curiosity about culturally competent research practices and whether clinical social workers such as myself, or readers in general, could identify

within a journal article the ways in which the researcher applied culturally competent practices. I believe that I was able to maintain a high level of objectivity throughout this research process by using the following methods. First, I was able to find an assessment tool that was developed outside the field of social work that had been used to assess scholarly work for cultural competency, and yet the tool was very much aligned with the mission and values of social work. Second, by clearly defining the coding criteria in such a way that followed common culturally competent practices found in the literature, I was able to review and code the articles by strictly following the criteria that were developed for the study, thereby reducing the amount of subjective judgment. Finally, the use of two additional reviewers provided important feedback regarding how the criteria were defined and the ways in which the data were coded and interpreted.

Some of my principal concerns from the beginning of the study were the recruitment and maintenance of the two graduate students who would be assisting in the coding effort. I realized that the successful completion of this content analysis would be dependent on finding two coders who would be willing to spend numerous hours meticulously reading articles and recording the codes that appeared within the articles. As a means of recruiting two students, a monetary incentive was offered for the successful completion of their efforts. The initial challenges in working with the students were primarily logistical. The fact that each individual worked and was going to school made scheduling meetings and trainings very complicated. This challenge affected the initial research timeline. The original estimate for completing the training portion of the research was one month; however, the process required approximately three months due to scheduling issues and demands of work and school. Once training was completed, the

challenge became setting an appropriate pace for reviewing articles in order to complete the study in a timely manner while simultaneously motivating reviewers and avoiding burnout that may occur because of the time and effort required to review the assigned documents. Efforts to motivate and increase the morale of the reviewers included having intermittent meetings throughout the process in which I expressed my appreciation to them verbally as well as provided food and a portion of their overall compensation. These meetings provided a helpful forum for the reviewers to express their successes and challenges as well as to exchange helpful suggestions to make the review process more effective and efficient. The reviewers were originally provided a set of highlighters to code each of the criteria in a unique color. One reviewer used this method and felt it helped her distinguish among the codes more effectively. The other reviewer found that highlighting the codes and writing the category in the margin was a very effective method. Reviewers also found that after reviewing numerous articles they were able to identify multiple criteria codes as they read an article, which made the reviewing process much more efficient. Both student reviewers completed their article coding in a timely manner and in accordance with the time line we established together. At the end of the coding process, the reviewers expressed their gratitude to be able to assist with the study, and yet they admitted that they were mentally and physically exhausted from reviewing and analyzing the articles.

APPENDIX F

RESEARCHER RELEVANCE CATEGORIES

1. Family/Children

Parenting
Mexican American family
Grandparent caregivers
Adoption/foster care
Treatment intervention
Service utilization
Resilience
Influence suicide
Child welfare system
Mentor program
Family capital

2. Health

Hemodialysis
Birth outcomes
Latina cancer
Folk healing
Caregivers
Ethnomedical care
Pediatric care
Breastfeeding education
Oral health of migrants
Health care debt/lending
Exercise
Sex/pregnancy youth

3. Mental Health

Psychodynamic therapy
Latina youth suicide
Adult depression
Treatment outcomes
Cuban Americans
Puerto Rican acculturation
Mexican American adults
Puerto Rican mothers
Integrated care
Acculturation
Practice outcomes

4. Women

Mexican Americans
Group therapy
Family support
Mother/daughter relationship
Attitude toward pregnancy
Contributions
Family planning/contraception
Comadres
Legal status
Impact of machismo
Welfare/workforce
Workplace experience

5. Adolescents

Skills programs
Mexican American mothers
Assets (mural art)
Acculturation prevention
Communication about sex
Spirituality in academics
Risk and resiliency
Latina youth stress

6. Latino Communities

Networking
Latino organizations
Sociodemographic data
Political empowerment
Impact on social work
Community leaders respond
Mexican American helping system
Promotores program
Community agencies

7. Cultural Competency

Clinicians
Practice models
Social work profession

Agency
Social work curriculum

8. Elderly

Caregivers
End of life planning
Community services
Adult day care
Poverty impact
Hospice utilization

9. Immigrants

Day laborers
Mothers' experiences
Social space theory
Mexican women
Social work

10. Measurement Tools

Psychosocial problems
Prenatal social work
Client satisfaction
Posttraumatic changes
Children's action scale
Caregiver burden
Family response HIV

11. Partner Violence

Latina victims
Church leader intervention
Sexual risk
Mexican women immigrants

12. HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS population
Group intervention

Puerto Rican family response
Barriers to care
Latina prevention
Latina coping styles

13. Substance Use

General information
Youth
Family intervention
Religion
Parent influence on youth

14. Men

Father involvement
Puerto Rican
Clinical treatment

15. Latino Characterizations

Criminal
Latino/Hispanic generally

16. Research

Social science theory
AIDS cultural competency

17. Political/Policy

Latino organizations

18. Latino Social Workers

Field instruction

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